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LETTER
TO A
PROTESTANT.

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A LETTER
TO A
PROTESTANT,
OR THE
BALANCE OF EVILS;
BEING A COMPARISON
OF THE PROBABLE CONSEQUENCES
OF EMANCIPATING
THE CATHOLICS OF IRELAND,
WITH THOSE OF LEAVING THEM IN THEIR PRESENT
CONDITION.

BY STEPHEN WOULFE, ESQ.
BARRISTER AT LAW.

Entre deux facons d'agir opposees voulez vous savoir celle a qui la preference est due? Calculez les effects en bien et en mal et decidez vous pour ce qui promet la plus grand somme de bonheur.

Bentham traité de legislation.

DEDICATED TO HENRY BROUGHAM, ESQ.

DUBLIN:
RICHARD MILLIKEN, 104, GRAFTON-STREET.

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A LETTER

FROM

OF THE

BALANCE OF POWER

BEING A TREATISE

ON THE PROBABLE CONSEQUENCES

OF THE OUTCOME

THE CATHOLIC OF IRELAND

WITH THOSE OF THE STATE IN WHICH THE

OF THE

BY STEPHEN JOYCE

ESQ.

THE AUTHOR OF THE HISTORY OF THE
CATHOLIC CHURCH IN IRELAND
AND OF THE HISTORY OF THE
CATHOLIC CHURCH IN ENGLAND

DEDICATED TO HER MAJESTY

THE QUEEN

LONDON: PRINTED BY J. JOHNSON, ST. PAUL'S CHURCH-YARD

1819

TO HENRY BROUGHAM, ESQ.

SIR,

I beg you will consider the following sheets, which I take the liberty of dedicating to you, as a small but a sincere token of the profound respect that I entertain for your public worth.

I have the honor to be

Your most obedient and

Humble Servant,

STEPHEN WOULFE.

Dublin,
23d February, 1819.

TO HENRY BROOKHAM, ESQ.

am,

I beg you will consider the following sheets, which I take the liberty of dedicating to you, as a small but a sincere token of the profound respect that I entertain for your public worth.

I have the honor to be

Your most obedient and

Humble Servant,

STEPHEN WOLSTEN

Printed
and Published, 1810.

A LETTER TO A PROTESTANT,

&c. &c.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

IN fulfilment of the promises you exacted from me when we last conversed together, I shall proceed to submit to you a detailed statement of the evils likely to result from emancipating and from not emancipating the Catholics of this country. In doing so, I must necessarily repeat not a little that has been said before. This, however, I shall avoid as much as is consistent with my plan. If any expression shall escape me which you might regard as too strong, you will, I am sure, give it the most favourable construction, and remember, that when "we speak of our injuries," some allowance should be made for "leaving our duty a little unthought of."

You are aware, that it is not pretended, that the Catholic bears any hostility to the civil part of the

constitution—it is not pretended that he prefers a despotism to a limited monarchy; that he is hostile to a House of Lords, or that he would wish to convert the House of Commons into the supreme assembly of a republic;—it is not pretended that he likes a trial by court martial more than a trial by jury. On all these, and such like matters, he has precisely the same interest as a Protestant, and consequently he cannot be supposed to be differently affected towards them;—it is only in the ecclesiastical department of the state that it is imagined that his interests are distinct: it is respecting this part alone, therefore, that any danger or revolution can be apprehended from him. If authority were wanting for such an obvious position, I would refer to that of Mr. Peel; the evil as stated by him to be dreaded from emancipating the Catholics is, “that when they become the preponderating body in Ireland, as in time they must, they will endeavour to strip the established church of her political supremacy, and restore their own to the splendour she anciently enjoyed.”

This evil consequence has been expressed by other persons, who think, like Mr. Peel, in a great diversity of ways; but notwithstanding the multiplied shapes which it assumes, and the various arguments by which the probability of its occurrence has been attempted to be proved, it is substantially as that gentleman has put it. If any other apprehensions be entertained, it is studiously concealed.

The nature of the apprehended evil being agreed upon, the next thing to be done is to enquire into the probability of its occurrence.

The probability of an evil to be inflicted by a human being depends upon his power and his inclination. As to the power of the Roman Catholics to strip the established church of her temporalities, it has been demonstrated to be quite unequal to that purpose ; this topic I shall touch upon very slightly ; *it is on their inclination to do so that I shall submit to you the result of my reflections at more length. I think I can satisfy you that such an inclination is imputed to them without sufficient reason. I think I shall be able to prove that there are no grounds for attributing to the Roman Catholics, either at present, or in the event of ^{their} ~~the~~ emancipation, any disposition or desire to interfere with the endowments of the established church, or to obtain any thing similar for ~~the~~ ^{their} own.* With this view I shall enquire,

First, Whether that they entertain such an inclination can be fairly collected from their creed, that is, from Christianity in general, or from those particular doctrines by which they differ from other sects of Christians.

Secondly, Whether it can be collected from what history records of the conduct of sects in general,

Thirdly, Whether it can be collected from those general principles of human nature which we are supposed to arrive at by self-examination or reflection.

Fourthly, Whether it can be collected from the demeanour of the Roman Catholics of Ireland, and the character they have recently exhibited.

As to the first of these enquiries, I believe you will agree with me, that there is nothing in the letter or the spirit of the Gospel, considered by themselves, by which the desire of a political establishment for our churches could be suggested or generated. That the labourer in the ministry should be decently sustained, the sacred writings certainly enjoin; but although they impose this duty upon each person, they do not command him to coerce others to perform it. If it be said, that every believer in Christianity must be desirous of ensuring the administration of its rites, my answer is, that it does not appear, either from holy writ or from experiment, that this object can be best attained by giving the priesthood a political establishment. The Catholics of Ireland have reason to know, that the duties of the Christian ministry may be well discharged without one. They have reason to know, and they feel, that without other support than the spontaneous offerings of a grateful people, and with no expectations but those which are placed beyond the grave, these

duties have been performed with diligence, with zeal, with unexampled self-devotion. Exalted as is the calling of a Christian pastor, it does not so completely lift him above humanity, as to exempt him from the influence of those circumstances which mould the character of other men ; he enjoys no special privilege to be rich, and to despise wealth ; to be great and to be meek of heart ; to enjoy those things that make the world delightful, without occasionally forgetting, or at least regretting, that it is not his home for ever.

That the public endowment of a religion may be useful in a political point of view, I shall neither deny or assert ; all I contend for is, that the scriptures do not require it, and that it is not necessarily an object of ambition to those who have adopted them as their guide. It suffices for my purpose to shew, that to believe in christianity, and to desire a political establishment for its ministers, are things so totally distinct, that from the existence of the one you could not, without reference to experience, infer the existence of the other. How far history, which is experience, warrants such an inference, will be the subject of a subsequent inquiry.

If, therefore, the Roman Catholics are to be accused of this ambition, by reason of their religion, and if it cannot be attributed to the general doctrine of christianity which they hold in common with the other members of the christian fa-

mily, it must, to justify the accusation, be traced to something peculiar to their faith ; but is there any thing peculiar to their faith to which it can be traced ? Examine it article by article, and nothing of that nature will appear ; but in going through the process of examination, you must take care not to attribute to them any article that they disclaim : it will not do to say that the Catholic church adopted a particular article some centuries ago, and that as the Catholic believes his church to be immutable, he must believe the article to this day. If all the steps in this kind of reasoning were true, it would only prove that the Catholic was guilty of a logical absurdity ; but by no means does it prove that he believes the article disclaimed. To ascertain whether he does not, you have no other means than his own confession ; for it is notorious that men do not always assent to conclusions justly drawn from premises they admit. Human opinions are not placed in the mind in regular succession like mathematical truths, of which each is elaborated from the preceding, and consequently consistent with all the rest ; they are received in isolated masses unconnected with each other, and uncomparred ; most of them without any proof, and very few pursued to their results. When we would demonstrate to another person the truth of any opinion, we do nothing else but shew that it is regularly deducible from some other which he admits. And is there a man, to whose experience it has not come home, that deductions of this kind, which seemed to him as

clear as the noon day, have failed in convincing others? Every failure of this kind is an irrefragable proof of the injustice of those men who attribute to a Catholic opinions which he disclaims, because they seem to them to be convertible into, or follow from those that he acknowledges.

The truth is, that with the generality of mankind every species of assent is more matter of habit than of reasoning. "It belongs rather to the sensitive than to the cogitative part of our nature;" if it be so, we should not wonder that doctrines which clash with human instincts should be repudiated by human beings, although a subtle logician deduce them from notions that they hold.

You may object, that to abide by men's own avowal or denial of their opinions exposes us to deception: it unquestionably does, but we have no better mode of ascertaining them. God has not thought proper to give us any other; he has reserved for his own scrutiny the secret folds and recesses of human thoughts, from which, if man were humble, he would learn that his jurisdiction does not reach them.

But it is useless to labour at this point. It is very evident in itself, and it is admitted by those of our opponents who have taken the most pains with our question, by Mr. Peel and Mr. Foster. Mr. Foster indeed violates the principle he admits; but Mr. Peel fairly abides by it; he goes

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further ; he not only gives the Catholics credit for the religious opinions which they disavow, but exonerates them from any imputations by reason of those which they acknowledge ; his words are those : “ I will not impute to the Roman Catholic church any doctrines which are not avowed. I will give to the professors of that faith the full advantage of every disclaimer they have made. I will suppose the Roman Catholic to have the same feelings, to be influenced by the same motives, to act on the same principles as other men.” He then proceeds to state the evil which he apprehends :

“ Do you mean to give them that fair proportion of political power to which their numbers, wealth, talents and education will entitle them ? If you do, can you believe that they will remain contented with the share you assign them ? Do you think, when they become the body most controlling the government of Ireland, as they must in process of time become, if they are constituted like other men, if they are sincere and zealous members of that religious persuasion which they profess ; if they believe your intrusive church has usurped the temporalities which she possesses, do you think that they will not aspire to the re-establishment of their own church in all its ancient splendour ? Is it natural that they should ? If I argue from my own feelings, if I place myself in their situation, I answer that it is not.”*

* Mr. Peel's Speech, 1817, Parliamentary Register.

This, you perceive, is a distinct admission that no designs upon the established church can be imputed to the Roman Catholics, by reason of any thing peculiar to their faith. Wherefore the first enquiry must be answered in the negative.

This brings to the second, namely, whether that they entertain this desire in question, can be collected from what history records of the conduct of sects in general.—If we argue that any sectarian feeling is an essential attribute of man, because it happens to have prevailed among men at some former period, we expose ourselves to much error. Such an acknowledged change has taken place in the human character in every thing connected with the endowment and propagation of his own religion, and the toleration of that of others, as must preclude every argument of this sort. You might as well say, that such and such are the feelings and opinions of a man, because they belonged to him when a child. On every modification of sectarianism man is as superior to his former self, as manhood is to infancy. It is not denied that he has flung off a whole mass of erroneous notions and bad feelings, which once clung to him as closely as the desire to obtain a political establishment for his church, and which were consequently as well entitled to be ranked among the attributes of his nature. That the idolator should die the death, was the universal cry from the Tiber to the Tweed ; from the shore of the Oronoko, where the Christian hunted down the heathen to the banks of the Mississippi, where he was in his turn

hunted by another Christian. Is it on that account to be regarded as a fixed principle of human nature that man should put the idolator to death? However Knox, Pole, Cranmer, Calvin, Mary or Elizabeth, may have differed on other points, in this they all concurred, that it was meritorious to exterminate by the sword the errors which reasoning could not remove: This was the then fundamental article of belief, the only one perhaps upon which Christians have been unanimous. Is it therefore to be classed among the immutable dispositions of human nature? History has been sufficiently ransacked for topics of mutual accusation. If searched with a better spirit, we might find occasion for a more charitable office, that of mutual congratulation on the improvement we have all of us undergone. But upon no subject does it enable us to felicitate ourselves with more heartfelt pride than on the alteration that has taken place in that ambition for our sect, or zeal, or whatever name is to be given to the false estimate of the duty we owe to our religion, which once universally prevailed. Some men, from spleen to the living rather than veneration for the dead, are fond of celebrating the superior wisdom and virtue of our fathers. Without wishing to depreciate their merit, I cannot but think that we are wiser and better than they were; in every thing that can be resolved into fanaticism, I am certain that we are. I am certain that the toleration which is now (with the exception of England and Spain) universally established, did not even enter into their imaginations.

Robertson, in his History of Charles the Fifth, furnishes a singular example of this assertion. He tells us that in 1555, the princes of the German empire being exhausted by the protracted wars, which had originated in their differences of religion, entered into a treaty called the Recess of Augsburgh, which was to put an end to their dissensions. And what do you think they mutually conceded? That no party in that treaty should make war upon another "for his religion;" and that every individual who did not adopt the worship of the state to which he belonged, "might transfer himself and his property to another;"—that is to say, their fury for the propagation and ascendancy of their doctrines was such, that they could only wring from each other by mutual necessity, that degree of toleration which the conqueror in such a contest would be now ashamed of offering to the vanquished: they could only purchase from each other that degree of toleration which now passes for the most atrocious persecution. They stipulated precisely for that kind and degree of toleration which, a century and a half afterwards, was regarded as a most savage persecution, when Lewis the Fourteenth, to his eternal infamy, compelled his Protestant subjects to quit their country or conform to his religion. And it is further to be observed, that this, the utmost toleration which the parties to that treaty could purchase from each other, was limited to the followers of the Confession of Augsburgh and the Roman Catholics: all other sects were left at the mercy of their rulers, to hang,

or burn, or imprison, as might be deemed most profitable to their souls ! And yet there are persons who grope into those ages for evidence of what it is natural that man should feel towards other sects, or desire for his own ! Our own history, which is sufficiently replete for all the purposes of instruction, with examples of what is to be imitated and avoided, should teach them the injustice of this proceeding. Have they forgotten that it was consistent with the opinions and the feelings of those men, by whose notions of what they owed to their religion it is attempted to judge us, that hundreds should be burned in England for speculative opinions that are now openly maintained ? Have they forgotten, that with the general approbation of his party, Archbishop Cranmer put to death a woman of the name of Bocher, for an erroneous exposition of the incarnation, and that he was afterwards burned for his own faith ? Have they forgotten that in the age by which they would judge of us, to differ in our creed by an unit from the number of religious articles by law established, made all the difference between life and death, and that the believer of five mysteries put to the sword, with indiscriminating detestation, the daring infidel who doubted of more than four, and the credulous fool who presumed to believe in six ? Even the great maxims which are considered as the landmarks that guide a statesman in his foreign politics, yielded to the fiery bigotry of the age. Thus Hume, speaking of the religious wars which ravaged France in the reign of Elizabeth, observes,

that although, according to the rules of political prudence in ordinary cases, it was her interest to support the power of France against the overwhelming strength of Spain, and the interests of Spain to distress France, yet “so much were the “great maxims of policy over-ruled, during that “age, by the disputes of theology, that Philip “found an advantage in supporting the established “government and religion of France, and Elizabeth in protecting faction and innovation.”

But such things only happened in the first tumult of the reformation. Let it be so! that is a sufficient reason for not considering the notions then entertained, and the passions which then raged, as fixed and immutable properties of human nature; but in point of fact, these things are *not* confined to the first tumults of the reformation. After the Revolution which placed the present family upon the throne, the principles of active persecution for conscience sake were carried into effect by several statutes. They were put in force against a class of men from whom no danger to the country could be apprehended, and under circumstances which render it manifest, that the good of souls was their *only* object; against Jews and Unitarians. In the 7th and 8th years of William's reign, the Unitarians were subjected, by act of parliament, to severe penalties for impugning the Church of England's exposition of the Trinity; and notwithstanding that several attempts

were made, from time to time, to repeal these acts, they continued in force until the year 1813. The acts respecting the Jews were of the same character. In the year 1752, an act was passed in their behalf, which was immediately afterwards repealed; not because it was in opposition to the rules of political economy, but because the Jews were the enemies of Christ.*

Such was the spirit of the past; such was the character of our fathers. A few men, whose towering intellect was prominent above the level of their time, may have caught a few rays of the then approaching light, which the lowest of us can now behold. Where are those principles now found, which then universally prevailed? A few miserable men may cling to them here and there, but they no longer sway the destinies of the world—they are dead amidst the rulers of mankind, whether they are emperors, kings, parlia-

▪ The line of argument pursued by the enemies of the Jews is rather curious; “they would so multiply in numbers, engross such wealth, and acquire such great power and influence in Great Britain, that their persons would be revered, their customs imitated, and Judaism become the fashionable religion of the English:” cited verbatim from Smollet’s account of the debate on this matter, in his *History of England*, vol. iii. page 348. I cannot but think it very disingenuous of some gentlemen to have made use of this argument against the Catholics, without confessing where they got it. We have only to substitute the word Judaism in lieu of Catholicity, and we have, in this little extract, an epitome of some very long speeches.

ments or congresses. They are no longer the springs of great movements among nations, or the objects of revolutions. South America has proclaimed the most unlimited toleration. North America has long enjoyed it. In all those countries, as well as modern France, it was the offspring of the spirit of the age, not of the accidental character of individuals. One of the first acts of the French National assembly, while yet it consisted of honest men, and had honest purposes in view, was to abolish every kind of religious disability. In England all active persecution has long ceased. Johanna Southcote publishes her ravings without experiencing the fate of her predecessor and namesake Johanna Bocher. In India we suffer the Bramin to celebrate his rites unmolested, and we concern ourselves very little with what may befall his disciples in another world, if they comport themselves as good subjects in the present. Auto-da-Fé no longer glare in Portugal and Spain. If the wretched being who wields the sceptre in that kingdom, still opposes the spirit of his age, let it be recorded for the honor of the country which he rules, that he acts against its opinion, as collected and expressed in its national assemblies. The House of Orange rules with equal law over Catholic and Protestant, and would find no difficulty in incorporating with their Protestant dominion another Catholic province, if they had it. Even in Ireland the scene of the severest and most protracted persecution with which God ever permitted his creatures to be visited, the spirit of fanaticism has

at last grown weary. The lower departments of the law, the magistracy, the navy, the army, are open to the talents and enterprise of the Catholic ; and although his situation is still very remote from the condition which awaits him, and which it is reasonable he should attain, yet compared with his former state of ignominy and proscription, it is the most liberal toleration.

As far, then, as the apprehension that the Roman Catholics will endeavour to subvert the temporal establishments of the church in favour of their sect is justified upon the evidence of history, the question will stand thus : we find that a tribe of opinions and feelings concerning the pre-eminence of our own, and the toleration of other sects, have prevailed for many ages, in every country, among all religions ; but we also find that they are now universally abandoned and detested. The disposition imputed to the Roman Catholics is a modification of those principles that have thus confessedly been relinquished. It relates to the same object, and where it exists it has usually the same purposes in view. I do not say it is always as culpable or as pernicious as the exploded principles we speak of, though in the case of the Roman Catholics of this country, I think it would ; but it differs from them rather in degree than in kind. Is it not then unreasonable to say that the Roman Catholics must wish to have tithes and titles for their pastors, because these things were desired by men from whom they are confessedly so dissimilar ? If partial

glimpses of history were sufficient to enable us to judge of what is natural to man, we might as reasonably contend that Protestants and Catholics shall always thirst for each other's blood, as that they shall always desire to connect their religion with the state : for viewed in detached portions, and uncorrected by modern experience, history would certainly prove both ; but taking it as it should be, on the large scale which alone renders it instructive, it proves neither. The utmost which it establishes is this, that all those malignant dispositions are accidental, but not essential properties of man ; that they are subject to increase and diminution, but that for many ages they have been on the wane, and are now sinking in obscurity : let us hope, for ever.

The truth is, that the arguments drawn against the Catholics and other sectaries from history, rest upon an assumption which is falsified by history itself. ~~We~~ assume an immutability in the dispositions and passions of men, which history proves to have no existence. It is proper to brutes to transmit their instincts unchanged to successive generations, but man is by his nature a progressive creature, whose views enlarge with the accumulation of his knowledge ; his mind opens with his condition ; his character and his habits experience the vicissitudes of his fortune : like the elemental particles of matter, which are supposed by philosophers to be unaltered in the various combinations to which they can be moulded by art or accident,

the primary principles of human action, our self-love, or pride, or whatever name is to be given to the original passions of our nature, may remain the same at all times and under all circumstances : but the objects to which we are impelled by these passions, the things which are to minister to our self-love and pride, are any thing but immutable. It will always be the character of man to reach at what he considers to be his interest, to aim at the esteem of his fellow creatures, to be susceptible of great enthusiasm, and to identify himself with great combinations of his fellow creatures ; but it is contrary to all experience to suppose that he shall always form the same estimate of his interest, that his enthusiasm shall always kindle for the same causes, or that the combinations of his fellow men, with which he will confound his fortunes, and to which he will transfer his sympathies, shall be always put and held together by the same principles. Similarity of colour, of descent, of language, of political feeling, of religion and of country, have each in their turn been the connecting principle of these combinations among men. A man of colour or a white, a Greek or a barbarian, a Guelph or a Ghibiline, a Papist or a heretic, a royalist or a democrat, have each at some time or place been prevailing appellations, and have denoted the principles of associations offensive and defensive, to which whatever existed of public sentiment was for the time directed. But of all the principles upon which men have ever been formed into these confederations, similarity of

country is the best, and that of religion is the worst; for exclusive love of our country only limits the sphere of our affections, but does not change their nature: within its boundaries there is abundant scope for all the charities of the human heart. But division by religion not only contracts the range of our good will, but sours and corrodes it; it not merely cuts the web of human society into distinct pieces, but it shoots through its entire length and in every direction, and defaces the texture of every part. Divide the human race as you please, some animosities and displeasures will grow from their division; but the animosities which are incidental to division by country, are affection itself in comparison with those which spring from divisions by religion; for the individuals whom diversity of country dissociates in interest are for the most part separated by space, and can only contemplate each other in the abstract—whereas, when the division is effected upon the principle of religion, the dissociated individuals meet and shock in daily life. They hate each other, not with the imbecility of public sentiment, but with the force and individuality of personal aversion. But although division by country is unquestionably the simplest and most permanent, the classes into which it distributes men are not immutable; they vary, like all the rest, in their extent and in the duties they inspire; there is scarcely a state of Europe that does not consist of parts which were once unconnected with, and only know each other for the purpose of ri-

valry and detestation: and there is scarcely an age of the world in which men have not changed in their opinions of the duty they owed their country. At one period it is considered superior, and at the next inferior to every other obligation; at one time the natural affections which spring from blood and kindred are studiously extinguished, that nothing may interfere with our devotion to our country: at another the duties imposed by the private relations are alone valued, and all pretension to others mocked at as hypocrisy or folly. When all other human combinations are thus changing, and when the passions they excite are all susceptible of these vicissitudes, why should we suppose that leagues founded upon identity of religion should alone be permanent, or expect that the notions of what it is our duty to do for them, should continue for ever without change? I see no better reason why men should be prevented from amalgamating together, and coalescing for the great purposes of their being, by differences in religion, than by the other differences of which they have outlived the dissociating power: and I must avow, that when I compare the scanty means with which human genius had hitherto took for the union of mankind, with the mighty instruments, physical and moral, which it has of late acquired; when I contemplate the causes of dissociation, which in spite of these scanty means it has already overcome, and which were seemingly more insuperable than those which yet remain to be subdued; when I reflect upon the difficulties of intercourse

which the arts have vanquished, the multitude of languages that have perished, the local prejudices and the diversity of creeds and customs which time and mutual interest have rendered inefficacious, I cannot but see, that there is something better than mere benevolence in the philosophy which teaches, that the causes of division shall continue to diminish as they have done heretofore, and the circle of the human affections shall continue to enlarge until it embraces in its wide expanse every former class of the human race.

But you may say that this doctrine of the mutable disposition of one species would take from history a great portion of her utility and dignity. To what purpose, you will perhaps ask, do we resort to the record of the past, to learn how man should be governed now or hereafter, if he be so variable, so unlike himself, at different times and periods? The answer is very obvious. We resort to history to learn how the variations in the human passions and affections are produced. We read it that we may discover the causes and the course of discipline by which the human mind is formed to good or evil. But of all the great lessons which it teaches upon this point, that which it behoves us most to know, that which is exemplified by the most terrible experience, is, that whatever is formidable in religious zeal can only be subdued by lenity and neglect. That persecution of every kind, whether it coerce the body or the mind, whether it assumes the form of a gibbet or a penal

law, begets fanaticism exactly in proportion to its severity. That if you diminish the persecution, the fanaticism which it caused diminishes in the same proportion; and that if you put an end to the persecution perfectly and entirely, the fanaticism ceases as completely and as entirely. If we are sincere in our desire to learn from history, it teaches (to use words of Montesquieu) “that to overthrow any
 “religion, we must assail it by the good things of
 “the world, and by the hopes of fortune; not
 “by that which makes men remember it, but by
 “that which causes them to forget it; not by
 “that which outrages mankind, but by every
 “thing which soothes them, and facilitates the
 “other passions of humanity in obtaining predominence over religion.” Penal laws, says that great man, have got their terrors; but religion has her terrors also, and men have pride. Between the fears of religion and the dread of shame, the human mind becomes capable of every thing.
 “Les ames deviennent atroces.”

This is the real lesson of experience: it teaches to suffer religious zeal to waste itself away by its natural ebullition—to permit it to spend itself in the empty air freely and without check: it is thus feeble and innocuous; the more intense its heat the sooner it is consumed: but if you venture to confine it, to restrain it from the expansion for which it strives, you render it, by the reaction of your effort to compress it, the most formidable agent in the moral world.

But it may be said, that it is not upon the authority of history alone that those hostile dispositions are imputed to the Catholics;—those who make the imputation allege, that every man must be conscious to himself, that in their condition he would feel them: they desire every one who doubts the truth of this assertion, to make the experiment upon himself; to imagine himself in their condition, and examine his own heart whether it be not inevitable, that he should endeavour to restore his church to her former splendour. This brings us to the third enquiry I had proposed.

The Catholics do not object to this mode of ascertaining their future dispositions. To ascertain how men will act and feel in a given condition, by making that condition our own, is, in general, no bad formula in calculations on human nature; but it requires to be used with caution, for the slightest error in its application will be enormously multiplied in the result: to use it with advantage, we must take care that we place ourselves in the exact condition of which we seek to find the influence on our feelings and opinions, and not in any other. If, out of the many and counteracting circumstances of which every condition is composed, we only contemplate a few, and those few of the same tendency, it is clear, that in effect we contemplate a situation different from the one which was proposed to be examined; and of which, consequently, the influence on our dispo-

sitions must be different. A particular mode of feeling may appear naturally and inseparably connected with the one which would be quite unnatural in the other. If the condition of the Catholics was that of a people forming a new country, of which they were the majority, and which had to select a state religion for the first time, without any motive to guide their preference but the partiality which men feel for their own opinions, they would unquestionably choose their own ; but this would not be the condition of the Catholics—nothing could be more unlike it : the Catholics would find themselves in the midst of a mighty empire, whose institutions were already formed and consolidated by long standing, and they would be but a small portion of that empire : they would find the political establishment pre-occupied by another church, which was secured in her enjoyment of it by every thing that gives strength and permanence to national institutions : they would find her fortified by the number, talent and activity of those who were more immediately in her service, by her powerful alliances with every order of the state, by the reasonable presumption of better right, which long possession carries with it ; by the religious veneration of which she was the object, and by the general attachment to civil liberty with which her security is supposed to be entwined, which she immediately preceded, if she did not cause ; with which she was assailed, and with which she triumphed. They would find her in strict alliance, offensive and defensive, with

the throne—presenting an immeasurable range of patronage to the monarch, ever ready to support those interests which he especially represents, and receiving, in return, the well-earned meed of the most strenuous protection. They would find her in strict alliance with the whole order of the nobles, raising the younger branches of their houses into equality with their parent stem, reviving the decayed splendour of ancient families or elevating to the patrician rank, by the munificence of her rewards and her dignities, the pious, the learned, and the fortunate. They would find that she controlled no contemptible part of the third legislative estate, and that her prelates were an essential portion of the second: they would find her subordinate employments ready filled by thousands from every order of the state, all men of education, and, for the most part, of those habits which give the possessors influence in society: they would perceive as many thousands more, waiting and qualifying themselves with great labour and expense, to be their successors. In a word, they would scarcely find a respectable family in the country of which a member does not enjoy, in possession or expectation, some portion of her princely revenues and titles. To all the persons influenced by such direct and powerful motives to uphold the church, there must be added, to form an estimate of her strength, four-fifths of the empire who were educated in her doctrines; mostly under the immediate direction of her ministry, and many of the most efficient for attack or for defence at the

venerable seats of learning where she presides. The Catholics would find all these men of all these orders and conditions combined, and justly combined against them, for the defence of the Protestant church establishment. Would they combine for the attack? Could they hope for, could they be so mad as to expect success? Could they expect it without interminable bloodshed and a civil war, which could be no other than of extermination? Could they think to triumph in that civil war? Would they risk what they enjoyed upon so desperate an adventure? Time must roll back to the ages of the crusades, before men shall be guilty of such frenzy. Let any honest Protestant then place himself in the condition of the Roman Catholics; let him consider the impossibility of success; the signal and merited vengeance that awaits failure; the ferocious strife that must at any rate ensue, be the triumph whose it may; the expenditure of human blood and happiness that must take place: let him consider that he had sworn to maintain the church he was assailing, and that it was through the liberality and generous confidence of her followers that he found himself in a situation to do injury. Let any Protestant put himself fairly in this the true condition of the Catholic, under these multitudinous motives to remain quiet; impelled by the single motive, religious zeal, to disturb the public peace, and we shall abide by his report of what is natural to that condition. I do not believe that there is a man in the country but Mr. Peel (and I would

not believe it of him but that he has declared it) who in such a condition would think of " restoring his church to her ancient splendour."*

The mistake through which men are betrayed into such errors respecting the effects of religious zeal, is very much aggravated by this; they form to themselves some notions of the force of that principle estimated by itself, and they calculate its effects upon the human conduct, without taking into consideration the counteracting and modifying powers under the joint impulse of which we act. They take a single force into the moral system, and they argue that man must move its direction, without regarding that his track is the combined result of many powers impelling us many ways. Even if it were proved that religious zeal, as far as it had influence, would prompt the Catholic in Parliament to obtain a political establishment for his church, it would not in reason follow that he should be excluded, if, according to the ordinary rules of human conduct, they would not yield to it; and most assuredly they would not yield to suggestions which are in opposition to all the other properties and passions of human nature---to common honesty, to the love of ease, of happiness, of safety, of our country.

It is a doctrine repugnant to every thing like confidence in public affairs which would teach us that a man, who belongs to an order in which he has

* Vide Mr. Peel's Speech in 1817, and page ante.

the slightest interest distinct from his fellow-citizens, is never to be trusted with their concerns. There is scarcely a man in the community that is not so circumstanced. If his share in the universal weal prevail over his partial interest, the state is sufficiently secured, though he were dishonest ; but it is monstrous to presume that every man is a fanatic or a rascal.

That this principle of religious fanaticism, or whatever it is to be called, is not an essential part of the human character ; or if it be that it is over-ruled in the ordinary condition of Society by the ordinary motives of human nature, does not rest upon theory alone. It is proved by the history of England and of Ireland. From the time of the revolution to the present day, not one well attested, unequivocal instance of an attempt having been made on the established church, either in or out of parliament, under the *influence of religious zeal*, is to be found : and yet such was the constitution of the parliaments of England and of Ireland during that period, that this principle, which urges us to obtain an ascendancy for our church, must have been called into activity among the dissenters, if it existed, or was not suppressed by other and better feelings ; for those parliaments were composed of Protestants who hated the kirk, and of Presbyterians who hated the church with with as much Christian detestation as the Catholics ever felt for either. If any man question the assertion, let him look to the history of the last

century ; let him look into the repeated and ineffectual efforts that have been made in England to repeal the test act ; let him read the debates which took place upon these occasions, and let him remember the outrages which they occasioned in various parts of England ; let him read the political pamphlets of the first half of the last century, especially of the Tories, and of Swift especially among the Tories : but in despite of the animosity which these things testify to have existed between the dissenters and the church of England, the Presbyterians of England and Ireland were admitted into a full participation of the power of the state with the Protestants. In Ireland, by a permanent legislative provision ; in England, by temporary expedients, which conferred all the power which the greatest confidence could have given, and which, perpetuating the hatred which confidence would have soothed, did every thing that was possible to render that power dangerous ; but, in spite of these fears, and of this hatred, the Presbyterians of Scotland have shared the legislation of England since the Union. The realm of Scotland, with her kirk, has been subjected to a parliament in England, of which the majority was Protestant. How came it to pass, if it be a necessary principle of human nature, that we should endeavour to establish our church wherever we can, that the Protestants of England did not endeavour to establish the Episcopal Church in Scotland, and that the Presbyterians of England and of Scotland did not endeavour to

to abolish episcopacy in England? How came it to pass that the Presbyterians of Ireland, who were as numerous as the Protestants, did not endeavour to establish the government of elders in this country? * If it be principle of human nature that

* Dean Swift wrote several treatises to prove that if the sacramental test acts were repealed in Ireland, the Dissenters would destroy the national church. His arguments are almost word for word the same as those used by Mr. Foster and Mr. Peel against the Catholics; but notwithstanding the cogency of his reasoning, the test acts were repealed, and *in point of fact*, the Dissenters made no attempt upon the established church. I cannot refrain from transcribing a few of the observations which, after being falsified by experience, as applied to the Presbyterians, are now made to bear upon the Roman Catholics. "If we might," says Swift, "be allowed to judge for ourselves, we had abundance of benefit by the sacramental test, and foresee a number of mischiefs would be the consequence of repealing it.—But, if you please, I will tell you the great objection we have against the repeal of the sacramental test; it is that we are verily persuaded the consequence will be an entire change of religion among us in no great compass of years. And pray observe how we reason in Ireland upon this matter," &c. and then he alleges that the Presbyterians of the north were superceding the ~~Catholics~~ ^{Protestants}, precisely in the way which Mr. Foster states the Catholics are now overrunning the ~~Protestants~~ ^{them}; he speaks of their mutual adherence, and their perpetual efforts to squeeze out any detached Protestant, who has the misfortune to find himself among them. In another part of the same letter: "If the consequence of repealing this clause (the sacramental test) should at some time or other enable the Presbyterians to work themselves up into the national church, instead of making Protestants unite, it would sow eternal divisions among them, &c.—Neither is it difficult to conjecture, from some late proceedings, at what rate these fanatics (meaning the Presbyterians) are likely to drive when-

men must endeavour to establish their own church in every country, how does it happen that the Protestant Parliament, Protestant King, and Protestant ministers of England, do not at once abolish the Catholic establishment of Canada? Will it be said that the Act of Union with Scotland, the Act of Settlement in England and in Ireland, and the treaty by which Canada was ceded her, guarded against these things? This is precisely what I contend for: that this dreaded zeal for the establishment of our religion may be kept down by other means than power; that it may be, and has been, and is corrected by better feelings, more potent in their influence, and more congenial to humanity; that it is effectually subdued by common honesty, by the faith of treaties, without sanction and contracts with imaginary existences; and would there be wanting to the Catholic powerful motives to bind him to his duty? Is he alone proof against the operation of public opinion,

"ever they get the whip and seat. *They have already set up courts of judicature in open contempt of the laws.*—They send missionaries every where in order to make converts, &c.—And what practices such principles as these (*with many others that might be invidious to mention*) may spawn when laid out in the sun, you may determine at leisure." A letter concerning the sacramental test; it is unnecessary to point out the parallel passages in the modern speeches. These were the errors of Swift; but he has an excuse for his errors which those who now use his arguments, refuted as they have been by time, cannot plead, want of *experience concerning the effect of toleration*. Politics is a science of experiment, and Swift could not be blamed for being ignorant of what has only been found by experiment subsequent to his time.

against the calls of gratitude, against sensibility to the reproach of broken faith? Would not the Act of Union of Scotland with England, and of Ireland with both, would not the acts of settlement in these kingdoms be as binding upon the Catholic as they have been found to be upon the other dissenters of the nation, corroborated as these acts would be with respect to the Roman Catholic, by the power in the offended party to punish and retaliate, by the certainty of failure, and the terror of the inevitable vengeance that must attend it? And the truth of these principles is established in other histories as well as ours. How many, many generations of Mahomedan sovereigns have reigned over Hindostan without interfering with its religion? In Saxony the Court is Catholic and almost absolute, and the religion of the country is Lutheran. Does the King of Saxony endeavour to establish Popery in its place? I venture to say that he is indifferent to the matter, and that he would be better pleased to recover his lost dominions from his cousin of Prussia, than to restore the Catholic religion in his country "to all her former splendour." And to what are we to attribute this absence of ambition for their religion in the sovereigns of India and of Europe? To the same feelings which extinguish it in this country; to common prudence, to a salutary foresight of the evils to which it must conduct them, and above all, to that wise indifference which we soon learn to feel for any object which clashes with our interests. For it is not to be overlooked, that these common motives of human life not only prevent

the action of religious zeal, but extinguish it altogether. Man so loathes the consciousness of having neglected his duty, that whatever course of action his interests or necessities have induced him to pursue for a length of time, is ultimately regarded by him, unless it be directly contrary to some great principle of morality, as that which it is most fit and honourable to follow. He feels it so pleasant to reflect that he has acted as he should, and so painful to think the contrary, that his conscience makes prodigious efforts to approve of whatever he has done ; and if it be at all capable of a favourable construction, it is sure to receive it at the easy and good-natured tribunal which tries it.

These are the principles and the conduct that are natural to man, and not that destructive disposition which would tear asunder the human race into as many hostile factions as there are differences of opinion : it is natural to man to love his country and his fellow creatures, to feel and to discharge the duties of the multitudinous relations, natural and constituted, in which he stands—to bear himself with propriety as a brother, a son, a father, a citizen, a magistrate, a member of a particular profession or class in the community to which he belongs, as well as in his character of a follower of a particular sect. Man has been so wonderfully adapted to his condition (what is there in the universe which is not adapted to its purpose ?) that the duties which spring from that condition

usually fortify each other : if ever they happen to clash, the stronger vanquishes the feebler, or assuages it to good. If his duty to his favoured sect urge him to an enterprise dangerous to his country and himself, his attachment to that country, his affection for his children, his anxiety for their welfare, and all the other feelings incidental to the different relations of social man, start up to keep him quiet ; “ they are hostages ” which nature has taken from him, to answer for his peaceable demeanour. If beings can be imagined without other feelings than religious zeal, divested of all the other attributes of men, we might expect the worst results from their differing in religion. We might pronounce that it must for ever keep them in estrangement from each other : but such beings are mere creatures of the fancy that *are* not and have not been ; it is only in highly distempered and transitory conditions of society, that any thing at all like it has been known. A mathematician shall draw imaginary lines which approach, and yet produced *ad infinitum*, shall never touch ; but for this purpose he must deprive them of all the qualities of really existing lines ; their breadth, their thickness, their solidity, must be rejected or his theorem will be false ; but you cannot strip man of his properties in this way : it would be a very useless system of ethics that rested upon postulates, which required that you should consider man as he is not ; the object of that science is man as he exists, with all the qualities and attributes of

real life about him, with his virtues as well as his crimes, with all the dispositions that keep him aloof from his fellow-creatures, but also with those wants and habitudes which draw him into contact and cohesion with their interests.

If we contemplate man upon these principles, we shall find him naturally averse to revolutions, and to all great changes that compromise his peace; he has so much to lose, so long to suffer, general utility presents itself so indistinctly to his eye, his individual interests are seen with such clearness and precision, the confusion and horror of civil strife are so appalling, that no revolution has ever occurred to which men were not driven by the most intolerable oppression; wrongs accumulated until human nature can no longer bear them, or the most desperate fanaticism, engendered by the bloodiest persecutions are barely sufficient to produce that phrenzy, that wrecklessness of consequences, and enthusiasm of self-devotion, which must have strung our hearts to desperation before we can think of effecting a great national revolution. Let the calumniators of mankind and their oppressors say what they will, chains and bolts are not required to coerce us into quiet; let them torture history as they please, they will find no instances of great commotions in a state without the most irresistible exasperation: civil wars may have been waged by contending nobles, who led their feudal vassals into the field as contending princes lead their armies: exiled princes have endeavoured to regain the thrones

they forfeited, and some of their former subjects have assisted them from hope, from gratitude, from a sense of duty : but a movement properly called national, has never taken place without a provocation commensurate with the magnitude of the evil : without the grossest provocation no commotion has been witnessed like that of the Jacqueries in England and in France ; the revolution of 1688, the French revolution, the American, or the countless rebellions which form the tissue of Irish story, or the more desperate strife which an attempt on the part of the Roman Catholics to establish their religion must excite.

I have now enquired into three of the four grounds upon which it seems to me possible that the sole pretence of disfranchising the Catholics could be supported. I now proceed to the fourth enquiry I had proposed, namely, whether any thing to justify it could be found in the character which the Catholics have exhibited in the pursuit of their claims ?

It has frequently been said that the insatiability with which they have pressed from the acquisition of one political privilege to the demand of another, furnishes reason to apprehend that when they have obtained their present object they will look for something else. “ Their demands, it is observed, “ have been uniformly progressive ; every concession has been made the occasion of a new claim ; “ first, they obtained the right of taking lands on “ lease, and afterwards in fee ; then the elective

“ franchise, and the practice of the law ; they
 “ now demand accession to the Bench, and Parlia-
 “ ment : Yield to their demands, and (following
 “ the course they have hitherto pursued) they will
 “ require your Bishoprics and Church livings.”

The least reflection will shew the unreasonable-
 ness of this mode of reasoning. What the Catho-
 lics have hitherto sought, and are now seeking,
 is essentially *distinct from* that which it is ap-
 prehended they *will* aim at. But all the privileges
 which they have hitherto successively obtained,
 and are *now* seeking for, are of *one nature* and
 description : they are all, as well what they have
 as what they have not, so intimately connected
 with each other, that the enjoyment of one draws to
 it the desire of the others. The power to pur-
 chase property and to transmit it to our succes-
 sors, to hold honourable and lucrative employ-
 ments, to try our fortunes in the army, and exer-
 cise our talents at the bar, to possess the privi-
 lege of free citizens at elections, to sit in parlia-
 ment when our property or our talents qualify us
 for that honour, are privileges so obviously of the
 same nature, that if you indulge a man with one
 he immediately seeks another. Let sophists dis-
 tinguish between them as they please, alleging
 that the enjoyment of some of these privileges is
 toleration, and of others the possession of political
 power, they are all of a common nature ; they
 have all a common origin, and are directed to a
 common object, the necessities and happiness of
 man : they are, without distinction, the artificial

creatures of society, from the seat in the legislature to the right of holding property : they are all parcels of the advantages which a citizen of England receives for the surrender of those immunities which jurists say they would have possessed in what they call a state of nature. From these advantages a multitude of citizens are excluded by means of their religion : it is natural they should endeavour to recover them, and having obtained one, should after a little time demand another ; and accordingly they have done so. But it does not follow that the man who has done this must necessarily entertain any wish for the aggrandisement of his sect : he betrays his love of political power if you please, but nothing like a desire to have a national endowment for his church. He may be impatiently desirous of the political privileges he seeks, and be perfectly indifferent to the temporal condition of his religion. The desire of political privileges and of sectarian aggrandisement are totally distinct passions ; the existence of one does not imply the existence of the other. They may co-exist in the same person, or they may not, most frequently they do not. This objection against the Catholics is founded upon an error in point of fact. It supposes that what they now seek is for the benefit of their religion : it is not ; they have never sought any thing for their religion ; they have demanded that they should *not suffer on account* of their religion, but they have never required that it should entitle them to any thing. They pray that they, a number of British sub-

jects, should have the privileges of that character, not in virtue or by reason of their religion, but *in spite* of it. They do not ask that it should entitle any man, whether priest or layman, to any advantage, but that it be not a bar to any other title he may have: they claim no merit or privilege by reason of being Catholics, but they require that their other merits may not be prejudiced by that circumstance. Religion has no farther connexion with other political privileges that they seek, than as far as it is made and has become the instrument and the name by which they are deprived of them. If they were excluded by any other name or means, as descendants of Milesius, for example, or believers in the miracles of St. Patrick, they would be equally importunate. They would in that case pray that their political merits might be estimated without any reference to their descent, or their belief in the power of the saint, as they now desire that they may be weighed without any regard to their religion. Their request may be reasonable or unreasonable, but in neither does it furnish matter for an inference that they desire an establishment for their religion. If they entertain this desire, it must be proved by something more than their desire of political privilege, which is a thing totally distinct. Unless, indeed, it be said that to suffer political privations, which we might avoid by relinquishing our religion, proves such a strong attachment to it as necessarily implies a wish to gain it a political establishment: which is foolish to excess; for a man who knows

any thing of human nature must be aware that to suffer on account of a religion does not prove the sincerity of our attachment to it, nor does the sincerity of our attachment prove a desire to give it a legal incorporation and endowment. Any one who knows the Roman Catholics of Ireland can attest, that on no consideration would they give their clergy a public stipend of any kind. There is nothing they hold in greater abhorrence ; whether reasonably or unreasonably is a matter of dispute, but the fact itself cannot be questioned. They behold them in circumstances of unostentatious mediocrity, equally remote from the pomp of wealth and the squalidness of poverty, subsisting on a revenue, which being demanded as a right to which they are entitled by their labours, is received without the humiliation of an eleemosynary donation ; but being a right which the law will not enforce, is given without the acrimony which accompanies the payment of what it enables us to exact. They behold their clergy zealous, pious, and efficient, surpassing in all the christian virtues the Catholic clergy of those countries which have endowments. They make the same observation among the sectaries whose clergy are dependants on the esteem and good will of their flocks. They attribute a great deal of this superior virtue in their pastors to the nature and the quality of their revenues, and they are therefore averse to alter them. What connexion is there between their obtaining the common privilege of a citizen and their changing their opinions

on this subject? Why, because they shall be no longer oppressed must they wish to corrupt their clergy by excessive wealth? Why, because they are no longer oppressed themselves must they think of oppressing others? And by what name less odious than oppression, could we stigmatize the offence the Catholics would be guilty of if they attempted to deprive the established clergy of the temporalities which they have purchased by most valuable considerations; by laborious studies, by the exercise of valuable interest, by the surrender of other pursuits, and the abandonment of the means of earning their bread in any other walks? Or supposing that these deprivations could be effected in a way that would not amount to robbery, why should this desire of an alteration in the state follow upon their endeavour to obtain the common privileges of citizens?

I am aware that you may think that although these considerations may satisfy us, that there is not sufficient reason to apprehend that Roman Catholics *will assail* the Established Church; yet that it cannot be pretended they have the same motives to *uphold* it by which the Protestants are actuated. To which I answer, that they have the same motives to uphold it as other dissenters, and the same as sway no small portion of the Protestants by whom it is preserved, namely, the same motives of public policy: they, as well as Protestants or Dissenters, may feel a strong conviction that an Established Church is necessary to the monarchy,

and that the establishment in being answers that purpose as well, and has possession to plead in preference to, any other. Let people write as they please of religious zeal, it is by agency of secular motives that men rally round the church. Whenever these motives cease to operate, the religious zeal that still continues in the country will not maintain the church a single day. If the country shall ever be of opinion that her ecclesiastical establishments are political evils; that they are not necessary to the monarchy, or that the monarchy is not necessary to the public good, "the Church will fall." I do not mean that her doctrines shall no longer be believed, but her earthly honours will be shorn: her temporalities will be prostrated with the throne which she defends. The temporal establishment of the Church of England is one of the bulwarks of the present form of government; though dedicated to religion, it serves the temporal exigencies of the state; like the temple of the Jews, it is a fortress and a temple. It is one of the great lines of circumvalation that encompass the throne; an order of hereditary nobility is the other. No, no; it is not the Catholics or the sectaries who will destroy the Church: if doomed to fall, it will be assailed by a different class of men, who will overthrow the throne and its appendages together; it need not fear the disciplined strength of the Papal hierarchy, the impetuosity of the Methodists, the steady hatred of the Calvinists, or what a learned Doctor was wont to call the "irregular and cossack warfare which is waged against it

by newer sects from old walls and ditches." All these attacks it may defy ; but let it tremble when it is assailed by what men, according to the diversity of their temperament, sagacity, or circumstances, call the spirit of philosophy, or of innovation. It is not from the men who teach the real presence, or the justification by mere faith, or the doctrine of election, that the solid fabric of the national church will be shaken : these disputes lost their interest ; they have become, in the estimation of mankind, stale and unprofitable ; it is not from these people it has to fear, but from the men who would persuade us that every monarchy is founded upon principles essentially inimical to the welfare of mankind ; who argue that in the monarchical form of government the interest of the ruler is frequently adverse to the interest of the subject ; and that another form is practicable which shall avoid all that is noxious in a monarchy, and preserve all that is good ; which shall combine the stability, the vigour, the tranquillity, the capability of extension and duration which have been hitherto thought to belong exclusively to monarchy, with establishments that shall render impossible a diversity between the interests of the ruling power and the nation ; which shall establish an identity of interests between them more complete than was ever attained in any republic of antiquity ; it is from the men who teach these things, and point to the wealth, the freedom of America, as the proof that they do not rave, that any thing is to be feared. If ever they succeed in

convincing the people of England that they have reached the period of sober and discreet ^{conduct} ~~manhood~~, when it is no longer fit that their persons and properties should be given in ward to kings and aristocracies; that they can manage their own concerns without the expensive and wasteful guardianship to which they have been so long committed, the throne of England will be pulled down, and the church will tumble with it: when the throne shall be cut down into an armed chair for a president of a house of congress; when, as Paine expresses it, it shall be found that all the functions of a king can be performed by a respectable gentleman for £800 a-year, the bishops and archbishops will not be left in possession of their honours and their pomp: at such a period of close investigation and minute economy, the tenth part not only of the land, but of human industry exercised upon it, may be thought too much for the established clergy. It may be considered wise, in that moment of innovation, to leave them, like us of the temporal professions, to adjust the terms of their renumeration with the persons who think proper to employ them. The Spenceans will be disappointed in their expectation of an equal partition of the soil. But the division of the property of the the clergy, by giving to every man the tithes of his own land, is most invitingly practicable, and may seem very desirable to the owners of that land. If it ever come to pass that by the diffusion of useful knowledge, by the increased facility of communication, by the freedom of discussion,

by the multiplication of that class of the human race who can live without labour, and have leisure to examine, to think, to write, and by the consequent accumulation of informed talent that will start up in all directions for the service of the state ; if by the operation of those causes, and the greater efficacy they will impart to public opinion as a moral restraint, moderation and public justice shall become so powerful amongst us that the cumbrous and expensive establishment of a royal government shall be no longer necessary to sustain order in these countries, the throne and the church will fall together. Until this change happen they will stand. Before such an amelioration of the public mind *no good man would wish to see either shaken, and no wise man will expect it.*

These topics are not so foreign to the subject as they may seem. To those who think that these speculations upon the progress of the public mind are founded upon truth, and that the great changes of which they treat will be beneficial to mankind, and come to pass, all collateral enquiries like that concerning the claims of the Roman Catholics, which draw aside the public mind from the grand objects of its pursuits, must present themselves in the shape of a great evil. They must regard them as impediments to that advancement of the human mind which they expect : on the other hand, to those who see nothing in these principles and the consequences which may be anticipated from their diffusion, but the dreams of

folly, or the machinations of the artful ; to those that think that these expectations and prophesies originate in discontent, in disappointment, in envy, in malignity, and establish themselves only among those who are compelled by their circumstances to wish for change and perils ; to such persons as these it must be evident that any thing which alienates the mind of people from the government, which causes them to view with rancour and displeasure all its movements, and misrepresent its motives, must be favourable to the diffusion of the principles which they deprecate. It is amongst those whom I have injured, or who imagine that I have injured them, (in both cases they will act in the same way) that a conspirator against my peace will look for partizans, and find them ; but of this more hereafter.

So far for the inclination of the Catholics to restore their church to their former splendour, and the necessity of coercion to restrain it. It was not my intention, when I began, to have said any thing as to the power they would acquire by emancipation to gratify this inclination ; but I cannot refrain from drawing your attention to it for a few moments.

The power of a party (their spirit and cohesion being supposed the same) consists in their numbers and political influence.

As to the increase in point of numbers, I be-

lieve the stock of Catholics in Ireland must be kept up principally by breeding, which will go on in the same way, whatever becomes of emancipation. That body may gain a few detached deserters here and there, but they will also lose a few. A religion never makes rapid strides in a country where it has been long known; long acquaintance deprives it of its power on the imagination, and the imagination is its conductor. It is pretty clear that the persons who have passed in great numbers from one religion to another never investigate very deeply the merits of what they abandon or what they adopt: as it is obvious from their capacity that logic had no share in their conversion, we must attribute it to the operation of grace, or to the dazzling influence of new doctrines on their imaginations. The Protestants cannot apprehend that the first shall ever work against them, and as far as the Catholic religion is concerned, he is secure from the latter; for the Catholic religion is too familiar to the people of these countries to surprize or to amaze, to fill with new fears, or to excite new hopes. A religion that can pretend to nothing of this kind, that can proclaim no new discovery, and can only repeat threats and promises, which are now familiar, is an ordinary object which causes no species of sensation; its merits and demerits pass by uncanvassed and unheeded; a more effectual mode of stopping its progress than refutation. In addition to which we are to notice, that we are specially instructed in childhood against every religion but our own, that was then

preached. If a religion, therefore, of any standing, happens to awake investigation, which it seldom does, it has to encounter the prejudices of infancy, and arguments prepared of old purposely to meet it. Therefore we find that no religious sect has ever made much progress in a country after the first forty or fifty years of its introduction; it rushes in a torrent while it is hot, but fortunately it cools at no great distance from its crater, and becomes fixed immoveably.

Now as to the increase of wealth among the Catholics, that also will go on nearly in the same way, whether they are emancipated or not. Notwithstanding several drawbacks upon their industry, the Catholics will continue to encrease in wealth, until the gross wealth of the country be divided between them and the Protestants in the proportion which they constitute of the population. This is the natural course of things. But let not the Protestants imagine, that as the Catholic grows rich ^{they are} ~~he is~~ to become poor. The wealth of a country is a perpetual course of consumption and renovation: when a man grows rich, he does not necessarily impoverish any other; he creates a new fund of riches for himself; so that the Protestant is not necessarily wealthier for the poverty of the Catholic, or poorer for his wealth: the contrary is true. If, therefore, the wealth of the Catholic body would be encreased by emancipation, the gross wealth of the country would be encreased. But is that an evil? Is it an evil in the

contemplation of those who can see no cause for the disturbances of the country, but the want of capital and employment? Is it an evil in the contemplation of those men, who say that the great body of Catholics suffer nothing by the condition they are placed in,—that to change it could only serve a dozen individuals, and leave the rest as they are? Let them take their choice; either the penal code keeps the Catholics poor, or it does not. If it does, it is an evil—if it does not, its repeal will not materially encrease their power to do mischief.

Now, as to the political influence of the Catholics, suppose that as the Catholics are one-fifth of the population of the empire, that they constituted one-fifth of the House of Commons: this is a very violent supposition, which cannot be realized for a long time to come, but it must be avowed that it *may* ultimately arrive; let us, therefore, suppose it to have happened. Let us suppose one hundred and thirty Catholic members in the House of Commons; let us suppose every one of them to be a fanatic, and above the temptation of a good place. Let us imagine that they all felt and thought alike, and that they were all of that desperate class, whose only hopes are founded on the chance of revolution. Such men, it must be confessed, usually abound among the needy. Let us however imagine that the Catholics were an exception to this rule; let us suppose that the Catholic knights of shires and borough-mongers yet to

be, were as eager for change as the hungry followers of Cataline. What could they do? Fight? They might as well do that without being in parliament; but perhaps by being there they could persuade the parliament to come into their views. Perhaps they could persuade the House of Commons, the Lords, and the King, to abolish the church establishment. But could they also persuade the people of England, who are more powerful than the King, the Lords, and the House of Commons? But as we are making extraordinary suppositions, let us imagine that they had also effected this—what then? The nation desires a change, and they effect it.

This, the only way in which the established church can be disturbed by Catholic emancipation, is certainly entitled to a place among the *possibilities* which the womb of time occasionally matures into reality. *It is possible* that by totally extinguishing religious animosities and sectarian feelings, and by introducing other notions of what is beneficial to the country, that it might lead to a general consent from the whole empire to modify the church establishment of Ireland. This is the only way in which it can by any possibility interfere with the established church—will it do so? Will such a change ever take place in the public feeling of Great Britain as to allow it? If it does it will be a season of great change; and though the Protestant establishment be pulled down, the Catholic hierarchy will not take its place. But

these things must be left to time ; it must be a remote time that shall witness such a change—so remote that it would be absurd to think of legislating for it. A legislator may and ought to make his laws with a prospect to futurity, with a view to the formation of the character of posterity, to the encrease of national wealth, to the perpetuity of commerce, to the foundation of new colonies, and so forth. These, and such like, are our only means of serving our descendants. As to taking measures to prevent them, in the third and fourth generation, from voluntarily adopting a particular measure, such as an alteration in the ecclesiastical establishment of the country, there can be nothing more absurd ; they will be better able than we are to decide upon the wisdom of such a change. The world will not retrograde in intelligence ; it is our vanity that makes us think it will. We need, therefore, be under no uneasiness for the uncoersed decisions of those who will come after us. Let us confine ourselves to our own part ; let us promote order, friendship, industry, wholesome emulation, and public spirit. Let us leave to our successors the best legacy a father can give to his sons, the example of his virtues and a good name : above all, let us take care that they may never blush for our barbarity and ignorance. If we can effect these things we shall have discharged our part in our generation, and may retire with an assurance that posterity will do theirs ; they will at least do justice to our memory.

I have now examined how far it is probable that the only evil which is apprehended from emancipating the Catholics will occur : I shall now proceed to the second part of my subject—the evils to be expected of leaving the Catholics as they now are.

The Catholics are abused for calling themselves slaves ; there is no honour in the appellation, and the very assumption of an ignominious name proves how much their pride has suffered ; if it be exaggeration, it is of that ordinary description in which the wretched seem to find some alleviation of misfortune ; but the persons who revile the Catholics for thus giving way to the bitterness of their spirit, forget that there are various kinds of slavery with various degrees of dependence on the master : in some his authority extends to life or limb ; in others it is limited to imprisonment or stripes ; in more mitigated forms, it does not reach beyond the labour of the slave, and the right to the produce of his industry. Now, certainly, the condition of the Catholic is not slavery in this sense of the word : he cannot be hanged without a trial, though Mr. Burke thought they ran a greater risk of the gallows than other men ;* neither is he deprived of

* “ The exclusion from the law, from Grand Juries, from
 “ Sheriffships and Under-Sheriffships, as well as from the
 “ Freedom of the Corporations, may subject them to severe
 “ hardships, as it may exclude them wholly from all that is
 “ beneficial, and expose them to all that is mischievous in a
 “ trial by jury. This was manifestly within my own observa-

the fruit of his own industry, except so far as it is taken away by a Parliament from which he is excluded, and forced into channels from which it never can return to him, which Mr. Burke also considers a great hardship;* but there is such a thing

tion; for I was three times in Ireland, from 1760 to 1767, when I had sufficient means of information concerning the inhuman proceedings, among which were many cruel murders, besides an infinity of outrages and oppressions (unknown before in a civilized age) which prevailed during that period, in consequence of a pretended conspiracy among Roman Catholics against the King's government." A letter to a Peer of Ireland on the Penal Laws against the Roman Catholics, 1782. Since that time it is to be observed that the exclusion from Grand Juries and Corporations has ceased to exist in law, though in practice the Roman Catholics are with difficulty admitted to any corporations, to none in due proportions, and to the principal, that of the city of Dublin, *not at all*. The other and more important exclusions still exist. The Judge, the Sheriff, and King's Counsel, must still be Protestants. God forbid that I should insinuate that in ordinary cases, either between man and man, or in the prosecution for ordinary outrages, these exclusions prevent the law from being fairly administered to a Roman Catholic.

His words are, "I know there is a cant language current about the difference between exclusion from employment, even to the most rigorous extent and exclusion from the natural benefit arising from a man's own industry. When a great portion of the labour of individuals goes to the state, and is by the state again returned to the individual through the medium of offices, and in the circuitous progress from the private to the public, and from the public to the private fund, the families from whom the revenue is taken are indemnified, and an equitable balance between the government and the subject is established; but if a great body of the people who contri-

as political servitude as well as domestic, which our ancestors have always regarded as a great calamity ; as an occasion of scorn or commiseration for those whose lot it was, according as it befel them through their misfortune or their baseness. It was once customary in England to taunt the Frenchman with the name of slave, until the fury into which he kindled at his shame set the world on fire. The Spaniard is regarded as a slave, and there is not a generous nature but glows with indignation at his wrongs. The Italian also, and the German, are called slaves, and no undegenerate Englishman contrasts their condition with his own, without returning thanks that he is not like them ; but be their condition as it may, an object of compassion or contempt, an occasion of indignation at the worthlessness of the oppressor, or at the cowardice of the oppressed, I do not hesitate to say, that for the gratification of all the political desires, and for all the purposes of ambition and public pride, the condition of the Frenchman, the Spaniard, or the German, is infinitely better than that in which the Catholics of Ireland are placed. Let a man content himself with his meat, and drink, and sleep—let him aspire to nothing better than the safe recurrence of

bute to this state lottery are excluded from all the prizes, the stopping the circulation with regard to them may be a most cruel hardship, amounting in effect to being doubly and trebly taxed ; and it will be felt as such to the very quick by all the families, high and low, of those hundreds of thousands who are denied their chance in the returned fruit of their own industry.”
—From the letter before quoted.

his daily pleasures, and devote himself exclusively to what gratifies his senses and his selfishness, unmindful of his country and his dignity, and not heeding that nature gave him an erect front, and bad him to look up : let him subdue himself to this ; and he shall live as commodiously in Madrid or Berlin, and perhaps more so, than in London or in Dublin. To such a man it is as indifferent as to a horse where he lives or dies, provided his pasture be good. In this respect the Spaniard is on, at least, as good a footing as the Catholic ; for all the more generous objects of mankind, for all those by which he is distinguished from the lower ranks of the creation, for celebrity, for honour, command, respect, he is infinitely his superior. And let it not be thought that the desire of these things is artificial ; let it not be thought a superfluous appetite which gorged and pampered man has unnaturally excited to relieve him from satiety. It is as real as the love of rest or food. Nature has given to all animals appetites calculated for their preservation in the condition she intended for them : but the natural state of man is to live in great communities with his fellow creatures. He has been accordingly endowed with appetites and inclinations that are necessary for the formation and preservation of human fellowship ; appetites that are as true to nature, as genuine, and as craving, as those which are employed for his individual support. The desire of friendship, of respect, of honour, of celebrity, of attaining those conditions that invest us with awe and veneration, and secure

our memory when we are no more, are as real and as necessary to the preservation of that condition for which nature framed us, as the more ignoble passions which minister exclusively to the safety and gratification of the individual. I would not defraud of their just praise the virtues which aim at the good will and happiness of those with whom we converse in private life ; but they have always been postponed in the estimation of mankind to those stronger passions which urge us to seek the approbation, and labour for the good of great bodies of the human race. The virtues and attachments of private life are necessary to form the domestic groupes which are the materials of society ; but these groupes would have no adhesion with each other were it not for the wider sympathies which encircle the entire mass, and bind us all into one paramount fraternity. These broader passions are not so generally felt, because it is not necessary for the well being of society that they should ; but wherever they do exist, they are not less powerful or less importunate ; nay, they are more powerful ; they never clash in noble natures with the others without subduing them. They may not always confer happiness when gratified, but which of our inclinations will ? From these loftier propensities the Catholic is no more exempt than other men ; but from all those things to which they urge he is excluded. To watch for the public safety in the senate, to distribute justice, to punish the guilty, to protect the innocent, to enforce the law against offenders on behalf of the community, to represent

his country in foreign nations, in a word, every kind of dignity and grandeur is denied to him. —It is true, that at present he is qualified by law for the highest military honours, but this is only by an act of the last year; he is still precluded from all those chances of attaining them which are enjoyed by those persons whose kindred or friends can have admission to the civil distinction of the state; he is destitute of all those aids in the steep ascent which can so easily be given by those who have reached, or are climbing into eminence by other paths. What then is left to him? All the sordid departments of the state. I do not mean to speak disrespectfully of any occupation, but sordid the departments are where mere gold is to be won in comparison with those where command and dignity remunerate success. The Catholic may make money in the counting-house; he may cultivate the land, and he may go through the drudgery of the law; but it is the drudgery of the law alone that he can have. There is no profession that requires a greater combination of excellent moral and intellectual qualities, more unremitting self-denial, more perseverance, rapidity, and clearness of comprehension, and more general decorum in behaviour, than the law; and (were it not for the honours to which it occasionally conducts) there is no walk in life where these qualities might not be more profitably employed: were it not for the chances of the distinctions which it occasionally confers, no man who could earn honorable bread in any other way would knowingly sub-

mit himself to the labour and difficulties which the bar imposes : but the chances of these distinctions compensate for every thing ; there is no member of that profession so constitutionally diffident of his destinies, so humble in his estimate of himself, but occasionally cheers his spirit, and confirms his courage, by the contemplation of what it is possible Fortune may do for him. It is our nature to calculate the magnitude of the prize rather than our chance of winning it : some degree of hope always mixes with our wishes ; and those broken aspirations to be the foremost in the course, which escape us in the very wreck of expectation, when we can scarcely pray not to be the last, demonstrate how late and how reluctantly it leaves us : but these sustaining possibilities are ^{ex}orably closed against the Catholic. He must never lift his heart beyond the subordinate departments, where his emolument, be it what it may, can never recompense his labours ; hope, which comes to all, can never visit him ; and he plods through life beyond the range of those contingencies which give dignity to the toil of others, and assuage it.

These are by the positive enactments of the legislature ; but this is not all. In the perpetual strife which the Catholics are making, and necessarily will make for emancipation from the severities they suffer, they unavoidably do things which are displeasing to the persons who possess power ; their claims have advanced so far, that without the most strenuous opposition from a very influential

portion of the cabinet, they can no longer be withheld. The consequence is, that until they are conceded, a very hostile feeling must subsist between them and a considerable portion of the government. The Catholics cannot but regard with acrimony the minister, through whose exertions their efforts to obtain equality are defeated, and the minister who resists them cannot regard with much good will the men by whom he knows he is disliked, and whom he must look upon as bad citizens ; especially when they are making continued, and, as he must think them, indecently pertinacious efforts to obtain what he believes would be destructive to the state. Whatever shall be the motives of his opposition to the Catholics, whether it be a conscientious belief of their political unworthiness to partake of the constitution, or that he has pledged himself to act with those who entertain such a belief, the result must be the same : (I do not say it as a matter of reproach, but as a necessary consequence of their relation to their opponents,) the result will be a strong aversion to every thing that is Catholic. But wherever a great part of the cabinet is anti-catholic, a great many of the high and inferior offices of the state must be so too ; for it would be criminal of a minister voluntarily to give power to those who differ from him on such an important subject of public policy. The result must be, that, generally speaking, any friendly intercourse between those persons who have obtained official situations through influence with the anti-catholic portion of the ad-

ministration and the Roman Catholics, will be almost impossible. As to the other officers of the state, who are indebted for their promotion to that part of the executive which is friendly to the Catholics, the most that can be expected of them is neutrality; they must associate on friendly terms with their colleagues in power, and they can scarcely do so and maintain much friendly communion with people of whom their colleagues entertain, or affect to entertain, so much suspicion; the consequence of which is, that the Catholic is shut out from all kindly interchange of hospitality with the persons who are in power, and from the circle in which they move. But this circle comprehends all that has any pretence to rank in the capital of Ireland; the few noblemen who reside in Dublin, the officers of the viceroy, the dignitaries of the church and of the law, a few wealthy merchants and landed proprietors, the commanders of the garrison and their families, are barely sufficient to form what may be called one good set. A further consequence of which is, that the Catholic, expelled from the circle to which he might belong by his fortune and accomplishments, must form a distinct society for himself; and thus there exists in Dublin two societies, one Protestant and one Catholic, as distinct from each other as if the first was in Pekin and the other in Madrid: the individuals of the one know those of the other very little: for domestic intercourse and the interchange of those civilities which humanize mankind they are almost totally unacquainted. Whatever mu-

tual intercourse subsists between them arises from their meeting in the pursuit of their daily avocations, and there it ends. Some individuals may be free of both these communities, but it is a freedom enjoyed by exceedingly few Catholics; it is a freedom difficultly, very difficultly obtained by them; it must be by some manifest superiority of rank and fortune over the bulk of those by whom they are admitted, and even then they must consider it an honour to be received by persons, to whom their presence would be an honour if they were of any religion but the Catholic. Without this superiority of rank a Catholic has scarcely a chance of access to that class of Protestants, which is composed of his political opponents, of their colleagues in office, and of the respectable Protestants whom they inevitably draw into one society with themselves; unless perchance he entitle himself to their condescension by a constant profession of indifference to his political condition, by joining in decrying those whose only fault is their excessive zeal in his behalf, by cringing upon men who hate and despise his sect, and by swallowing bumpers to toasts which a man of spirit would resent as an insult. As for those Catholics who take an active part in the public proceedings of their body, they are shunned as if they were infected with the plague. If their vanity were all that suffered by the exclusion, their loss would scarcely deserve notice: the Catholic who could descend to the consideration of such paltry interests when his liberties are at stake, merits to be

mortified. But much graver interests than those of vanity are wounded; he is precluded from fortifying, by the honourable assiduities of private life, whatever interest he possesses, and is deprived of all the legitimate advantages which spring from social communion with the wealthy and the powerful. Many of these advantages are perhaps too minute to bear a several examination; but taken together they form a mass that adds not a little to the weight of the positive enactments that afflict him.

This is the condition of the Roman Catholics: whether you choose to call it a condition of slavery or of liberty, sure I am it is a state of great humiliation and privation: it is such a condition, that rather than submit to it, there is not an Englishman for whose degeneracy his ancestors would not blush, but would gladly lose his life: but it is time to examine how the interests of the nation at large are affected by it.

If the statement of the consequences that seem to me likely to result from continuing the Catholics in the condition they are now placed appear alarming, let it not be mistaken for a threat; every man who has the least claim to candour will acknowledge that there is nothing of the spirit of a menace in a fair exposition of necessary consequences, however likely to rouse our fears those consequences may be; he will in such an exposition recognise the office of a friend, exercising a well intended foresight on our behalf, and warning us

of an evil which he is sincerely anxious to avert ; an office not only compatible with, but necessarily implying a kindly feeling towards the persons whom it is designed to place upon their guard. A menace is the denunciation of an evil to be inflicted by ourselves, of our free will ; it is made for selfish purposes, implies hostile dispositions, and consequently disentitles him who uses it to the favour of those to whom it is addressed. This feeling I totally disclaim. I do not speak of the evil to which I allude of a thing to be done by me, or perhaps by any Catholic now living, but as something which must sooner or later result from the continuance of the present system, be the dispositions of the generation which now suffers under it what they may.

We must remember, that the arguments which are now urged against the Catholics are not founded upon temporary circumstances, made use of with a view to the postponement of their emancipation to a more favourable time, for example, until the expiration of ten or twenty years. If their relief were only delayed for such a period it is not likely that any particular consequence would result ; hope would still sustain the Catholics, and they could go on petitioning for the twenty years to come, as they have done for the twenty just passed ; but the arguments now used against them are of a nature which, if valid, must exclude them from what they seek for ever. *It is of the conse-*

quences of perpetual exclusion that I proceed to treat.

Have the men who advise the perpetuation of the present system ever pondered upon the consequences that must result from the adoption of their counsel? Do they regard the Catholics as stocks or stones? Is it possible they can think, that if the Catholics lose all hope of being redressed by parliament, they would not redress themselves if they had power? Surely the men who think that, under every circumstance to soothe, in spite of every motive to demean himself as a good citizen, in spite of interest, in spite of affection, in spite of all the motives that maintain the social league, the Catholic would meditate the destruction of the state, surely these men cannot expect that he shall be its friend, when he is divested of the privileges of a citizen, when he is rejected from the state, when he is stigmatized as its enemy. All this may be necessary in the opinion of some, but in the opinion of no reasonable man can it be other than the occasion of the most inevitable animosities; it is enough that they consider the Catholic so dissimilar from other men as to be insensible of kindness; they cannot imagine him to be so totally unlike the species of which he wears the form, as to be also insensible to injury; if he cannot love when others love, he cannot love when others hate; it would be monstrous to expect *it*; it would be the grossest hypocrisy in a Catholic to pretend it. It is idle to disguise it, if the Ca-

tholics ever cease to hope for relief from the legislature of their country (which they as yet have never done,) they will seek it wherever they are likely to find it. They will avail themselves of the first opportunity, if opportunity should ever come, of taking without asking what they asked and were refused. It is contrary to nature that when the Catholic once despairs he should continue an attached citizen. "But who cares whether he is attached or not?" cries the advocate of violence; "his neck is under our foot, and he stirs but to be crushed." This is very valliant to be sure! but is it wisdom? is it probity? is it the mode in which mankind is to be governed? is it the treatment due to our fellow creature, to our fellow citizen, to our brother christian? to a man whose crime it is that he wishes to embrace his countrymen in friendship, and be allowed to prove that he is not undeserving of their regard? Is there nothing to be deprecated in provoking gloomy and deep resentments because you can set those resentments at defiance? But *can* you set them at defiance? Yes, for the present you can; but are the circumstances immutable which now enable you to do so? Is your prosperity as everlasting as your hatred? Is that supremacy over the ocean and the land, is that tranquillity at home, are those splendid alliances abroad, that have raised you above the vulgar policy of conciliating your fellow citizens, to endure for ever without the possibility of change? Is war for ever banished from the world? Are those valiant legions who won a triumph in every battle as im-

mortal as their renown? Where is the nation over whose head twenty years have rolled without being obliged to struggle with the collected might of all her citizens for her very life? The history of every country is the record of a perpetual strife to maintain existence: like the beings who compose it, the structure of a nation is wonderful and fearful: it is obnoxious to a thousand modes of violence from without; a thousand causes of decay within: it is folly to close our eyes against the truth; depend upon it the time must come, and at no distant period, when the strength, though uncombined and scattered of four millions of people in this empire, will be a great instrument of good or of evil. How many rebellions have ravaged England, Ireland, and Scotland within one century? within the memory of the living how often has the legislature proclaimed the existence of deep and broad conspiracies against the state? How often has the act of Habeas Corpus been in consequence suspended? Suppose one of the conspiracies was so far successful as to make it doubtful who should be the traitors, those who assailed or those who defended the existing institutions: suppose that at such a fearful moment the Catholics should be plunged into irremediable despair by the predominance of their adversaries' counsel. Suppose that the leaders of the body which was arrayed against the constitution as it now is, by whatever name they are to be called, offered religious liberty to all sects; would the Catholic be as much an object of contempt then as he is now? Would an

hasty act, passed when it could no longer be withheld, appease the accumulated resentments of perhaps half a century of suffering? "Let us beware," says the prophetic Bacon, "how we suffer the matter of troubles to be prepared, for no man can forbid the sparks that may set all on fire." Are men at a loss to imagine whence the spark may come that shall set fire to the country? Is there no latent fire in Europe which it may hereafter blaze and kindle it? Are Prussia, Spain or Italy satisfied with their lot? Is there a man who thinks that the world will continue as it is for half a century to come? Are revolutions at an end, or have men ceased to be susceptible of the emotions with which the spectacle of great changes was wont to agitate them heretofore? Is there nothing appalling in the dilating grandeur of America spreading her giant form from the Atlantic to the Pacific, and making it doubtful, by the unprecedented prosperity she enjoys, whether her enmity is doomed to be more formidable to these countries than her example? But these are mere contingencies! These events, that may raise our oppressed citizens to the respectability of being able to do an injury, may never happen, and if they do not until such a lapse of time, that it would be foolish to trouble ourselves about them. To be sure they may never happen, and if at all, probably not for a long time. But are they impossible or improbable? Are they so visionary that a wise man will disdain to guard himself against them? Are they at any rate so remote as the evils that

are apprehended from emancipating the Catholics, and which are urged to caution us against that measure? Is it apprehended that the attack which the emancipated Roman Catholics are to make on the established church shall be immediate? Is that accumulation of Catholic force, which is so dreaded, to take place all at once? Is it to be caused at once by the act of their emancipation? It is not pretended—it is not pretended that the evils anticipated by their opponents from their emancipation will occur in this generation, but in a future; and even then not certainly, but possibly. But if the Catholics were never to be emancipated, that they would avail themselves of any occasion that would enable them to liberate themselves, that such occasion would from some quarter or another at last present itself, whether from the bosom of England, or from Europe or America, before half a century, is not merely probable or possible, but certain and inevitable. The more I live the more I learn to be surprized at nothing; but I confess it amazes me that men should be so keen sighted into the most remote futurity to descry something that may justify division and disfranchisement, and not be able to see a single one of the thousand things so much nearer and so much larger that recommend conciliation and benevolence.

There is one fact from which it might chance to be collected that the pressure of the penal code upon the Roman Catholics would, under no cir-

cumstances, be sufficient to urge them to revolt—namely, that hitherto it has not had that effect. But it must be remembered that, from the Revolution, up I may say to the year 1793, they had no power whatever. It was not until the commencement of this reign that they received any relief from the most deplorable condition to which a people was ever sunk ;* until they drew a little breath it is not wonderful that they should and could do nothing ; scattered, weakened, and vigilantly watched as they always were. In 1793, they obtained substantial benefits, benefits which placed that generation of Catholics in a condition for which, at the commencement of their lives, they had not dared to hope. From that day to this they have always been sustained by

▪ Swift describes their condition in these words—"We
 " look upon the Catholics to be altogether as inconsiderable
 " as the women and the children ; their lands are entirely taken from them, and they are rendered incapable of ever purchasing any more ; and for the little that remains, provision
 " is made by the late act against Popery, that it will daily
 " crumble away : to prevent which some of the most considerable among them have already turned Protestants, and so in
 " all probability will many more. Then the Popish priests
 " are all registered, and without permission (which I hope will
 " not be granted) they can have no successors ; so that the
 " Protestant clergy will find it perhaps no difficult matter to
 " bring great numbers over to the church ; and in the meantime the common people, without leaders, without discipline or natural courage, being little better than the hewers
 " of wood and drawers of water, are out of all capability to do
 " any mischief, if they were ever so well inclined."—*Swift's Works, Letter concerning the Sacramental Test.*

one expectation or another, and they are at this moment more confident of success than ever they were before. They see all that is great and noble in the land arrayed in their behalf; they see the men who have borne the weight of the mightiest monarchies decline the glorious burden rather than desert their cause. They see toleration and philosophy diffusing itself on every side; therefore they have not despaired, and therefore the consequence of despair did not take place; but even so, I am quite sure that fewer Catholics would have been concerned in the late rebellion if they had been subject to no religious disabilities; indeed I question if that rebellion could have taken place. I am quite certain that the chiefs of that enterprise calculated not a little on the antipathy to the government and the republican spirit, which the penal code had diffused among the Catholics: nor was their calculation entirely erroneous; since that period, independent of the well founded hopes the Catholics have been entertained of relief from parliament, they have been kept down by a great military establishment, by the terror with which suppressed revolt always fills the minds of men, and by the living memory of the burnings and hangings which they witnessed. But the generation that saw these things with their own eyes is passing rapidly away, to be succeeded by another who can only learn them from the unimpressive and unconsulted testimony of history.

But suppose that the penal code were insuffici-

ent to excite a civil war, or to render it more formidable if excited by other causes ; suppose that England, exempt from the hazards and vicissitudes to which nature has subjected man and all his works, shall always enjoy, without diminution, the strength she now possesses : is civil war the only evil that is to be apprehended from the dissatisfaction of the people towards their government ? Is the tranquillity of Ireland sufficiently secured because rebellion cannot tear down the union flag from the ramparts of the castle, or insult the garrisons of our cities ? Do you account as nothing the desultory outrages of political animosity which have for years given to a part of Ireland the appearance of a settlement on the confines of an Indian tribe, where no man is secure, when he retires to rest, that he will not be awaked by the whoop and the tomahawk of savages ? Do you account as nothing the blood of peaceful citizens shed upon their own hearths, and the fires that kindle the midnight sky from their burning habitations ? Do you account as nothing what Mr. Peel calls the conjuration of a people against the law, and against every thing that dares to appeal to it for protection or redress ?

But these things “ have nothing to do with the Catholics’ “penal code :” the perpetrators of these outrages do not care a straw whether Lord Fingal be in parliament or not ; these enormities spring from other causes, which might operate when not a vestige of the penal code were left.

In contradiction I assert, that the penal code is the immediate cause of a great portion of these outrages, and must continue to be so as long as it exists, and that it contributes to the production of the others largely, though not immediately : but as this ~~assertion~~ ^{point} is too important to be decided by mere assertion, it will be proper to enquire further into the matter.

Mr. Peel has fully explained the nature of these disturbances in his official exposée of the condition of Ireland, made on the 23d June 1814, in the House of Commons, when he moved for leave to bring in a bill for the better execution of the law in that country. His speech is given at full length in Hansard's Parliamentary Register, vol. 28, page 163; if you take the trouble to look into that work you will see that the following extracts are made fairly :

“ These disturbances,” he said, “ originated in different causes; the first that he would mention were the result of political combinations; these combinations,” he said, “ were confined to infatuated people, who were the dupes of others.” The second class of combinations were, “ Those which were formed under pretence of redressing what was represented as a local grievance.” The objects of these combinations were various, though the mode of carrying them into effect was in most cases the same, to inflict punishment upon those who disobeyed their orders ;

“ who gave more than the prices they thought
 “ fit to fix upon land, to prevent new tenants
 “ from taking land, and for other similar pur-
 “ poses.”

“ There was also a third species of disturbance
 “ of the public peace, to which he alluded with un-
 “ feigned regret—he meant that which arose from
 “ religious animosity. He would not now enter
 “ into the history of those unfortunate disputes,
 “ but he had the satisfaction to state, *that not-*
 “ *withstanding the pains that had been taken in*
 “ *Ireland, by means of the press and of in-*
 “ *flammatory speeches, to induce the Roman Ca-*
 “ *tholics to believe that the Irish Government*
 “ *was not disposed to administer impartial justice*
 “ *to them, as well as to their Protestant fellow-*
 “ *subjects, that these efforts had in a great degree*
 “ *failed of success.** There existed in Ireland

■ No man ever said that the government or the judges were guilty of partiality in administering justice between the Catholics and Protestants, but *they did* say (and it is obviously true) that juries animated *by party spirit* would not, and could not be impartial *on party* questions; that a jury of Orangemen uniformly screen the Orangemen for offences against their adversaries; and that whenever the sheriff happened to be a Ribbandman, and his pannel Ribbandmen, that the Orangeman had not justice; this is all that was ever pretended upon this point: nor was such an obvious proposition asserted in inflammatory speeches and a libellous press, as Mr. Peel alleged; but in grave debates in the House of Commons, by the lights and ornaments of their country, by Mr. Ponsonby and Sir John Newport: the latter went so far as to say, in his

“ many obstacles to the administration of the law,
 “ and one of the *greatest*, was the difficulty of pro-
 “ curing persons to give information to govern-
 “ ment, and evidence against the violators of the
 “ peace.”

Such was the information respecting the disturbances in Ireland which her minister furnished to the parliament. I think you must perceive that they have their root in the penal code, and must endure whilst it lasts.

In the first instance, I entreat your attention to those interruptions of the public tranquillity which arise from religious difference. They constitute Mr. Peel's third class of disturbances, but I shall examine them before the others, because, they are the more immediate consequence of their common cause, and operate not a little in aggravating the rest.

It cannot surely be expected that the ignorant

place in the House of Commons, 25th Nov. 1814, (vide Hansard, vol. 29, page 522,) speaking of the Insurrection Act, that “ *to his own knowledge* the powers given by that act to the magistrate had, in many instances, been perverted to gratify personal resentments and private views, merely from a *rancorous feeling, arising from a difference of religious belief.*” Would the magistrate who was guilty of this offence be a fit man to return or sit upon a jury, to investigate an affray between Orangemen and Catholics? And is a man to be called an incendiary for saying that he would not? And would his being placed there not encrease the general distrust, and hatred of the law that Mr. Peel complains of?

people of this country should be wiser than the legislature, or that they should love each other, when they are told by the law that they are proper objects for mutual hatred: the law tells the Protestant that the Catholics are irreconcilably his enemies, and that he cannot be trusted with his concerns; she tells the Catholic that his interest is incompatible with the safety of the Protestant establishment. Can we wonder that thus instructed by such authority, the people of the north, consisting in equal numbers of Protestants and Catholics, should split in two hostile factions? Were the penal code to perform its work in silence, if it produced no complaints, no entreaties for relief, no remonstrance, no retorts, this separation of the mixed population of the north of Ireland into two well defined and hostile factions, would be inevitable. Superiority is too pleasing to the weakness of human nature not to be enjoyed, and the most obvious mode of enjoying it is to make it felt by our inferiors; it matters not whether the inequality has been produced by the depression of others, or by our own elevation; the ignorant and narrow-minded will equally exult in the disparity. But the operation of the penal code never can be silent; it must henceforth, as long as it exists, be the subject of incessant invective and of defence; this is the law of its future being to which those who wish to continue it must make up their minds. Until it be destroyed, radically and totally destroyed, or until the privilege of discussion be utterly suppressed, the passions of the people of Ireland must be kept inflamed by perpetual arguments to prove the rights of Catholic

citizens to freedom, and by opposing arguments that they have forfeited their right by their crimes or bad propensities. In a nation where so much is done by popular opinion, the men who think it their duty or their interest to keep the Catholics as they are, will naturally endeavour to gain the public opinion to their side: they will cultivate its alliance by the most exaggerated accounts of Catholic enormities, and the grossest misrepresentation of their religious principles: the press will teem with the most exasperating reproaches and justifications; it might, perhaps, suffice for that part of the press which supports the Catholics, to reason, to expostulate, to soothe, to state in cold and abstract reasoning the policy and justice of giving equal liberty to all; but metaphysical reasoning will not satisfy an angry and disappointed multitude; the press must kindle with the kindling passions of the party to which it is devoted; it will find itself best supported when it becomes the vehicle of all that can gall and exasperate its opponents: this applies to the press, both Catholic and Anti-Catholic, but more especially to the latter, for that part of the press will have recourse to vituperation, not only to divert the tedium of abstract dissertation, or to enliven the dullness of mere logic, but to supply the total want of both. Invective is its *only argument*, for its object is to prove that the Roman Catholics are unworthy, by reason of their religion, of sharing the constitution with their brother Protestants. Now this can only be done by convicting them of some turpitude or unsocial principle,—accordingly it will teem with the grossest misrepre-

sentations of Catholic principles and conduct,—their dogmas will be laughed at, their moral principles reviled, and every thing which they hold dear assailed by the obscenest ribaldry.

From this state of things there must ensue frequent personal altercations and private enmities, which will again mingle with the public contest, and re-animate it when it droops; general hate will lead to private wrongs, and private wrongs again conduct to general animosity; personal friendships and dislikes will draw into the contest many individuals who were indifferent to the original subject of dispute, and they again will draw their friends into the feud, and thus the breach will spread in every direction until it divide the entire nation.

This would be bad enough, and tend in no slight degree to the religious animosities of which we are investigating the cause, if the government were quite neutral in the conflict; but the Irish government will not, and cannot remain neutral. As I have before observed, the Catholic question has so far advanced, that if the influential members of a great family, whose opinions have so much weight in the decisions of the legislature, if the ministry, in all its departments, were formed of men who were perfectly indifferent to the defeat or success of the Catholics, they would obviously succeed in a very short time. If the leading members of the government therefore shall take a part (as they cannot but do,) against the demands of the Catholics, the effect must be

that the religious feud will be again further exasperated in its malignity, enlarged and elevated in its sphere. The pulpit will resound with the coarsest bilingsgate of the porter-house, and every man in every station who seeks to raise himself by the favour of an Anti-Catholic minister, will find it his interest to strain every faculty he possesses, not only to shew that he himself dislikes or fears the Catholics, but to convince others that they should do the same ; which is synonymous with saying that it will be his interest to excite religious hatred. Every man who signs a petition against the Catholics, or attends a meeting to frustrate their designs, necessarily foment religious hatred ; it may not be the object but it is the inevitable consequence of his act. I am not at present enquiring whether in doing these things he deserves praise or blame, whether it is not reasonable that he should express his opinions as well as a Catholic. All I contend for is, that in point of fact, by so doing, he contributes to keep alive the religious dissensions which have caused such misery in this country ; he makes the Catholic dislike him, and he persuades others to distrust the Catholic. Is not this fomenting religious hatred ? And is it not clear that the man who can do this most effectually is (*cæteris paribus*) the man whom an Anti-Catholic minister will consider most worthy of his favours ? Nothing can be more certain than that to an Anti-Catholic minister it will be a strong objection to any man that he supports a great measure which the minister holds to be pernicious. Nothing can be more clear than that to such a minister

it will appear not a small addition to the merit of any man that he is sufficiently enlightened to think on the most important subject of national policy like himself. Has this preference no effect in alienating the Catholics from the government? Has it no effect in affixing upon the government the odium of every insult that is offered to the Catholic by its adherents, and of every outrage that is committed by the Orangemen of the North? Has the natural preference of the minister for the persons who think with him, no influence in encreasing the numbers and the respectability of these associations, and consequently in adding to their audacity and expectation of impunity? And how is it expected that comprising in their numbers almost all who think with the anti-catholic portion of the ministry, or wish to recommend themselves to its patronage, and consequently deeming themselves protected by the executive, how is it expected that they will conduct themselves towards the defenceless and notoriously detested Catholics? Is it matter of wonder, that in their drunken orgies, in their insulting commemoration of ancient defeats, in their triumphant display of orange flags, the passions of both parties should be so inflamed as to *provoke*, or to *give* insult? Is it to be wondered at that these insults should lead to murder and to massacre? Is it wonderful that in this fever of men's blood, the verdict of a jury should only satisfy one part? What is the result? That the party which conceives itself to have been wronged will consider the verdict as the sentence of faction, not the voice of law; and that they should thenceforward

think it necessary to look elsewhere for justice and protection. And where do you think an exasperated, ignorant, deluded, people shall look for justice under these circumstances? Where but to themselves; where but to revenge, converting the fear of their opponents into their own defence? Thus counter associations will be formed which will arrogate the function of inflicting vengeance for all injuries; the regular tribunals of the country will thus fall into disrepute and odium; and all who furnish it with information, or who in any wise contribute to its proceedings, will, by a great body of the people, be looked upon as enemies. Hence the frequent murders of witnesses and of jurors; hence the difficulty in obtaining information, which Mr. Peel complains of; hence, "the confederacy in guilt, and the warfare "against the regular institutions of the country," which he feels so deeply, though he will not remove their cause.

These things must exist as long as the penal code is suffered to remain; would they cease if it were destroyed? There is every probability they would. Whatever exasperation is produced by the parliamentary debates, touching the Catholics, or the Orangemen, by aggregate meetings, by committees, by Catholic speeches and resolutions, and newspaper discussions, would cease *immediately*; the sympathy which both Catholics and their opponents imagine to exist between the orange lodges and the influential part of the Irish government would cease. The administration could no longer

be an Anti-catholic administration ; its preponderating members must have been friendly to the measure or it would not have passed ; and its success would prove that the prejudices against it in high quarters had subsided. It would cease to be the duty or the interest of any minister to depreciate the estimation in which the Catholics should be held, (it is at present both the one and the other,) and consequently the activity and zeal in exciting hostility to that body would cease to be a recommendation ; this would inevitably produce a revolution in the demeanour of all the persons who look for places ; a class of people very numerous in Ireland, for like vermin they abound in diseased and emaciated habits : cut off the government expectants from the Orange lodges ; cut off the underlings of those expectants who mimic the conduct of their little principal ; cut off the mayors of corporations, and petty officers, and aldermen, and common council men, who seek in some paltry place a refuge from impending bankruptcy ; do this, and you cut off the efficient strength of the Orange lodges ; and you will effectually do it by repealing the penal code. If it were once believed throughout Ireland that the Orangemen and Orange principle swere discountenanced at the Castle ; if the nation could be once convinced that an Orangeman would be in as bad repute with government as a ribbandman is now, every thing that has the least claim to *respectability of condition* in the Orange lodges would immediately withdraw.

Their arms would be taken from the miserable remnant of that party, they would perceive themselves abandoned to the law for their transgressions, and they would never dare to repeat the outrage of Kilkeel, the massacre of Corinshiega, or that perfidious assassination which was more recently perpetrated at Aughnacloy. Convinced at length that they were not encouraged by authority, seeing themselves deserted by the respectable gentry of the country, and having nothing to protect them but their good conduct, they would be more cautious *how they gave offence*, and they would lose the power of *provoking it*. If at all continued, those commemorations, and party tunes, and orange lilies, that are now heard and seen with such poignant indignation by the humiliated Catholics, would lose their force; they would be no longer the symbols of domination and superiority; that superiority by supposition would be no more. "The Battle of the Boyne," and "Croppies lie down," and "Protestant Boys," and such like things, would pass into a signification quite different from that they at present bear: if played at all, they would be associated with feelings of civil liberty, in which Catholic and Protestant would share. They are now a conventional language to express joy at the humiliation of the Catholics, and a determination to continue it. "The Glorious Memory," and such toasts, mean nothing else;* when the humiliation was no more the signs

* It has often surprised me that men could be so silly as to express wonder at the Roman Catholics being displeased at

which now express it would be useless, or be made to signify something else ; they might, by a natural association, become the memorials of the dethronement of a king—they might be employed with the same meaning as Major Cartwright attaches to his toasts, when he drinks “the Barons who extorted Magna Charta from King John,” or “the Revolution which cashiered the Stuarts.” But the Orangemen are not remarkable for their attachments to the principles of democracy, and would probably drop these toasts and emblems together, when they ceased to annoy the Papists, and could only mark their own love of civil liberty.

So far for the connexion which exists between the Catholic penal code and those disturbances of the public peace arising from religious distinctions : as to the others, though they leave no outward mark of religious hatred, yet they are also either caused, or greatly encreased by the same circumstances ; it is impossible not to see that they spring from disaffection to the British government :—the first class into which Mr. Peel has divided them is, according to himself, *political* ; the second class he does not consider to have political purposes in view,

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these toasts and emblems ; *they are meant as an insult*, they can be meant as nothing else when they are known to be taken as such. Insults are measured by the intention of him who gives, not by the pain of him who suffers. If a man lays his finger upon my shoulder, with the intent that it should be considered a blow, the insult is as great as if he knocked me down.

but merely local regulations, such as the price of wages, rent, tithes, &c. but in truth they are both bottomed upon an assumption of the sovereign power; they both assume legislative functions; they do not aim at objects personal to the conspirators, but at the establishment of general laws which are to bind the country; they carry on an open war as far as they have the means, against the government, and every thing connected with it: they look upon that government as an usurpation, as a dominion of force which it is meritorious to impede, to elude, to subvert: and in pursuit of what they consider an act of patriotism, they put to death without remorse all whom they consider enemies or traitors. They have not arms, or intelligence, or leaders, or money, sufficient to draw out a regular army into the field; if they had we should have a campaign in Ireland before Easter. They suit their mode of warfare to their means; they carry on a desperate guerilla war with government, in which they give and expect no quarter. Every straggling soldier whom they catch, every gauger, every tithe-proctor, every active magistrate, who has distinguished himself against them, and whom they rank among their enemies, is put to the sword. This is a dreadful state of things, and the more so because it sucks into its vortex of guilt men who would shudder at the very thought of participating in such enormities, from the ordinary motives which impel to crime. It is the first step which costs, and when once we stain ourselves with blood for

any object, we shall be more likely to spill it for another. It is notorious that men whom no gold could hire to commit ordinary assassinations, such as take place in France and in England, and every country of the world, have, in the maintenance of their system, for the enforcement of their orders, or for the punishment of their opponents, committed the most horrible barbarities ; men, women, children ; decrepid age, in which the bad passions might be supposed to have burned out ; infancy, in which it is impossible they could have kindled, have been known to commit acts without compunction to forward the object of these associations, at which humanity revolts. By what sophistry do they reconcile their conscience to these enormities ? Simply this, *they regard them as acts of warfare against the government or its supporters, and they hate the government.* Mr. Peel tells us that three entire parishes in the most populous district of Ireland, conspired to commit a murder on one Connell, an informer. Can it be believed that all the inhabitants of three parishes had undergone that degree of demoralization to which the perpetrators of such murders as that of Fualdes must have been reduced ? These parishes are chosen by Mr. Peel, not to show their peculiar malignity in crime, but as instances of what was then to be considered the condition of the south of Ireland : could society endure if all the inhabitants of the south were as depraved as the murderers of Fualdes ? impossible—three parishes, containing from twenty to thirty thousand

people of all ages and sexes, would never combine to put a man to death, unless they thought it a praise-worthy act ; our nature is *not* so bad. But how could they consider such an abomination an act of merit ? they considered themselves in a state of hostility with the government, and Connell was an abetter of the government.

Now what can be the cause of this hostility to the government ? I do not ask what was the original root from which it might spring. But what is the cause that *acts continually* in perpetuation of this hatred, from which it draws perpetual renovation and activity ? it must have some. Like other national discontents that we have heard of, it would starve and perish if not regularly fed and nourished. It is unprecedented that national discontent could remain so unimpaired, so unmitigated through such a lapse of time, if not perpetuated by some perpetually operating cause. Look to history. The Scots hated the English ; they all hated them for their religion, many for the union, and not a few for the substitution on the throne of England of a new family for the old line of Scottish kings. The Scots several times rebelled, and for nearly half a century were always ready to rebel. At present they are the most orderly nation in the world ; the nation to whose institutions the world now turns for lessons in the great truths and examples of political wisdom. Two generations passed away, and in their course obliterated the very name of Stuart. Their me-

mory continues perhaps a theme of mournful contemplation to the innocuous enthusiast who loves to dwell upon the glories of the bold Bruce and of Wallace Wight. But it has ceased to kindle the living passions that drive the armed rebel to the field. Again, in France: the provinces in the South of France were as hostile to the revolutionary government, as it was possible for the people of Ireland to be to that of England. For many years they carried on a desultory war against it, not very dissimilar from that which is waged in the disturbed districts against our own. Nevertheless tranquillity was restored some years before the fall of Bonaparte, and in one generation more under his sway, the Bourbons would have experienced the oblivion to which time has consigned the memory of the Stuarts. It must be confessed that Bonaparte's was a military government, and the Vendéans were put to death in thousands by fire and sword. But I should be glad to know if the same expedient has not been resorted to in Ireland. I should be glad to know what form of death remains to be tried in Ireland by which nature can be overcome. The lash, the gibbet, the bayonet, the damp of solitary dungeons, the pestilence of jails crammed to suffocation, the silent horror of secret execution, the ignominy of the public scaffold, have been all at one time or other resorted to in Ireland, and humanity shudders to relate, have been resorted to in vain. The law has been disencumbered of every form that could impede it; it has been stripped of every thing but the sword. Insurrection acts;

acts for summary trials, for confinement after sunset; every thing that could be done short of decimation, to inspire terror into the timid, or to disconcert the machinations of the guilty, have been put into requisition by the legislature; but all in vain. Crime has triumphed over the law; the law, for the strength of which nothing should be too powerful, too humble for its protection, or too wily for its vigilance, has been eluded, trampled upon and despised. Its intelligence has been cut off—its giant might has been exhausted in ineffectual efforts to apprehend the guilty, and it now gropes for its victims through the island, like what the poets feign of the ancient Cyclop, furious, blind and baffled.

There is some cause for this peculiar vivaciousness of Irish discontent; all men of reason must admit it. The penal code is ~~in~~adequate to this effect, and no other cause can be assigned which is.

I am aware that many persons attribute this condition of the police of Ireland to the absence of her landed proprietors, which I cannot but consider quite inadequate to the effect. It is possible that the presence of a kindly and active gentry might check the consequences which result from the hostility of the people to the government, *but their absence could not cause this hostility*, it must have some other source. As to the poverty of our people, the same remark applies; and even if the poverty of the country had a share in produc-

ing these discontents, the poverty itself is continued in some measure by the penal code, and so likewise is the absence of our landholders. But be this as it may, it is beyond the reach, and cannot be cured by the act of Parliament; but the penal code, and all its consequences, are within its grasp.

I am not ignorant that some shallow politicians think that the operation of the Catholic penal code, being confined to persons in the better stations of life, can have no effect in producing discontent among the lower classes—I answer, that *it produces an order of things which inevitably causes discontent*. They know very little of human nature if they suppose that we concern ourselves in nothing which does not affect our own immediate interests: whatever these men may deem there are such principles in nature as public spirit, as national pride, as sensibility to disrespect, as indignation at oppression, though it is only directed at a class to which we belong, and does not touch us individually: at least so think the best writers on legislation; at least so thinks Mr. Bentham—his opinion is, “that the injury done to
 “one individual in such a case becomes an injury to all—from which feeling there springs a
 “crowd of evils—*antipathy against the particular*
 “*law that shocks the prejudice*; antipathy against
 “the body of the laws, of which the obnoxious
 “law constitutes a part—antipathy against the
 “government which executes the laws—a disposition not to aid their execution; a disposition

“to resist them clandestinely; a disposition to re-
 “resist them openly and by force; a disposition
 “to take away the government from those who
 “rear and plunge (*roidissent*) against the pub-
 “lic will—evils which carry in their train the
 “crimes which constitute those combinations of
 “calamities called rebellion and civil war, evils
 “which again bring on others in the form of pu-
 “nishments, to which recourse is had to put them
 “down. Such is the disastrous concatenation of
 “consequences that follow from thwarting the
 “most fantastical prejudice of a people.” This is
 the opinion of Mr. Bentham. I could scarcely
 have expected to find, in a general treatise on le-
 gislation, so minute a description of the condition
 of this country.

But as any of Mr. Bentham's opinions are not
 in good repute with a certain class of people,
 I shall appeal to that of our late secretary ^{himself},
 to show that the humblest peasant in ~~England~~ ^{Ireland} is
 not insensible to the condition of the body with
 which the law has classed him.

In the speech on the police of Ireland, before
 quoted, Mr. Peel said, “that the efforts made to
 convince the people of Ireland that the law was not
 fairly administered to them, had, in *in a great de-
 gree*, failed.” Now this passage contains, first, a
 direct allegation that such efforts *were made*, and
 it would be foolish to affect not to know that he
 meant that they were made by the Catholic leaders;

secondly, it contains an implied allegation that these efforts were not entirely unsuccessful. Again, on the 30th May, 1815, in a debate on a motion respecting the Catholic committee, he expressly accuses that assembly of having mainly contributed to the disturbances which then prevailed; and he makes the charge not from his own observation merely, but upon the alleged authority of all the Irish grand juries of that year. He even appeals to the fact as quite notorious: "every one," he says, "acquainted with the state of Ireland must know the effect which these bodies have produced." Describing the constitution of the Catholic committee, he also said "how far was the peace and honour of the United Kingdom likely to be supported by such a body?" That question might be answered by every member of of the grand juries who had almost unanimously attributed to that body the disturbed state of these countries." And a year before that, on the 8th of June, 1814, in answer to a question from Sir John Hippesley, he said, "that the lower orders, and a great proportion of the population, were mislead by *the professions of the Catholic Board*, and were not aware of the *mischievous tendency* of their proceedings." Now these passages clearly prove that the proceedings and condition of the upper classes of the Catholics do, in Mr. Peel's opinion, materially affect the minds of the lower orders. It may indeed be said that he only spoke of the Catholic committee, and not of the penal code; but let me ask, was not the Catholic com-

mittee the offspring of the penal code? There will always be a Catholic committee as long as the penal code shall last; that is, as long as it shall last there will always be found men of ardent minds among the Catholics of Ireland who will think themselves aggrieved, and who will not smother their complaints; who will diffuse as far as they can by their writings, and by their speeches in aggregate assemblies, in committees, and in newspapers, that spirit of indignation at their condition, which (whether right or wrong) they consider it base to be without. For these purposes they must hold frequent popular assemblies, where of necessity the most inflammatory subjects will be discussed; the original principles of society, the end of all its institutions, the original rights of man, the boundaries of allegiance, the usurpations of sovereigns over indefeasible privileges of the subject, and every other topic which can agitate society will be the obvious theme of their declamation, mingled with invectives against their enemies, and retorts upon the vile attacks of which they are themselves the objects. Does any man imagine that this state will cease before the penal code? No man but a fool can think it. You may call the people who do these things by what names you please, agitators, demagogues, incendiaries—they are nothing more or less than ordinary men, with those passions which nature gives to at least one man out of every hundred that she creates; they will be found in the next generation as well as this. If the law place men in a condition to which, according to

the known properties of human nature, they will do things injurious to the public weal, the law is responsible for those things : whether the men whom it drives into the commission of these acts are to be considered culpable in a moral point of view, is a question that has nothing to do with the wisdom or folly of the law : the only question for the legislature is this—is their conduct the natural consequence of the law? If it be, place the censure where you will, the calamity itself must fall upon the nation.

I have now gone through the greatest part of the task which I had undertaken; I have examined the evils to be expected from emancipating the Catholics, and from leaving them in their present state. It has been shewn that the only evil that can rationally be feared from that emancipation is, that they would employ the power conferred by that measure to subvert the established church, and obtain a national endowment for their own. We have seen that no reason for *charging* them with any inclination to acquire an endowment for themselves, or to molest that of others, is to be found, in the general spirit of Christianity, in the Catholic religion, in history, in the fair results of self examination, in the demeanour of the Catholics themselves. We have examined how far the power to gratify this inclination, if they felt it, would be encreased by their emancipation. We have seen it would not encrease their numbers, their spirit or cohesion; that their wealth

must continue encreasing without emancipation, and that every check to its accumulation was a national calamity. As to the political power they would acquire, we have seen that it would be still inadequate to enable them to carry their supposed object by coercion, and that nothing could be more foolish than to feel any apprehensions for what they may carry by persuasion, inasmuch as posterity will be better able to decide for themselves than we are. As to the evils of leaving the Catholics in their present state, we have found them to be not remote or contingent, but immediate and inevitable. We have found them to be, (to speak the words of Mr. Bentham) “ antipathy “ against the law, antipathy against the govern- “ ment, a disposition to resist it, rebellion and civil war ;”—or if the language of Mr. Peel is to be preferred, “ perpetual disturbances without pre- “ cise and definite objects, a general confederacy “ in crime, a comprehensive conspiracy in guilt, a “ systematic opposition to all laws and municipal “ institutions.”

These effects of the Catholic penal code are of that palpable and glaring character which force themselves on the notice of the most unthinking ; but it also produces other results which carry on their work of devastation in silence and in secrecy, like a pestilence which follows at the heels of war to consummate the havoc of the sword ; results of which the havoc is not directed against our fields, our homes, our limbs, but against the noblest qua-

lities of the human soul ; against public generosity, devotion for the public service, disinterestedness, in fine, against every grand or useful quality which holds a place in the catalogue of the civic virtues. Should any man enquire for the traces of these effects, let him seek in Ireland for that universal indignation at individual oppression, that sympathetic spirit which binds together the whole nation in a common cause with the meanest individual when a general principle is violated in his person, that enlightened vigilance over the conduct of their rulers, and that devotion to the public service which have rendered England what she is, and which at all times secure for her that splendid mass of integrity and talent, which radiating its light and heat above, beneath, and all around, spreads wider and wider every day the sphere of her happiness and renown. I do not say that generous public sentiments are unknown in Ireland, but in comparison with the spirit of England, they more resemble the cold light of a reflected flame than the kindling energy of a native fire. Whatever we have of them seems borrowed from the example, exhortation, and intermixture with our neighbours ; look for instance to the institutions for the diffusion of knowledge and useful habits in both countries ; in one they immediately strike their roots into the soil and flourish, while in the other, like exotics in an uncongenial climate, they pine away, or if they grow at all, only yield a sickly and scanty fruit. Let any man compare the various philanthropic associations, such as Lancasterian schools

and Savings' Banks in both countries, and he will see with what a different spirit they are conducted. There is wanting in this country the disposition, both to aid and to be aided, by this sort of things : proceeding from the upper classes of society, often from the immediate members of the executive, they are regarded by our people as the creatures of the government, which they cannot be persuaded has their interest at heart ; they thus share the prejudices which are entertained against the government ; hence the difficulty of persuading them that public schools are designed for their benefit, and have no sinister object, such as proselytism, in view ; hence the difficulty of making the respectable classes of the different parties into which Ireland is divided, unite for their establishment on any, even the most unexceptionable principles ; hence the repeated efforts which the persons who patronize them are obliged to make to convince the public that they have no other views than those which they profess. The comparative progress of the Savings' Banks in both countries equally illustrates the different spirit of the two countries. Nor is the disposition to give assistance less affected than the disposition to receive it : the want of confidence among the lower orders in the proffered beneficence of the wealthy, is insensibly confounded with ingratitude ; the lukewarm do not fail to convert it into an excuse to their conscience for want of zeal : the habit of regarding the bulk of a country as proper to be sacrificed to their interest and security, imperceptibly but necessarily con-

tracts the sphere of their benevolence : the consequence of teaching them that the interests of the few to which they belong are to be preferred to the good of the many ;—carried one gradation further, is to teach them to prefer their own interest to every other. The lessons of selfishness are not wanting to human nature ; we are sufficiently prone to limit our affections to those objects which even the brutes identify with themselves without being disciplined into selfishness by the law ; but this is the lesson of the law as it now stands : hence the notorious venality of the upper classes of the Irish, and hence it is that not a few in every class mock at the very idea of public spirit. I do in my heart believe that there is not as much love of liberty among the influential classes of this country as would be sufficient to maintain a free government for one year without the aid of our English neighbours.*

But let me make a supposition : suppose that I am wrong in thinking that injury begets resentment ; wrong in thinking unappeased resentments may break out into rebellions ; in thinking that England is exposed like other nations to vicissitudes which may render rebellions formidable ; in think-

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▪ I only speak of the general tendency of the penal code ; of course there are men in Ireland who have escaped its influence ; there are noblemen and gentlemen in this country who would have been an ornament to any country in the world.

ing a fixed hostility between the people and the government may be injurious to the public quiet, though it should not break out into regular rebellion ; in thinking that this hostility has a bad effect upon the tone of the public mind politically considered ;—in a word, let me suppose that the Catholics were to become, to a man, contented with their state, and destitute of all desire for the valuable privileges which are enjoyed by other citizens ; this is surely the condition of that body most to be desired, *though impossible to be expected* by the advocates of the perpetuity of the penal code. I ask it of every honest man, is that condition not a great evil in itself ? must it not be considered so by every one who is worthy of the freedom he enjoys ? is it nothing to deprive a class of citizens which comprehends a full fifth of the the population of this great empire, and which is more numerous than the entire population of many kingdoms which have played no inglorious part on the theatre of modern Europe ; is it no evil to deprive this great section of the empire of privileges in defence of which our fathers were proud to shed their blood ? Is liberty but a name, a mere theme of declamation among fools and cheats ? Is it a mere imaginary good of which the value depends upon the capricious estimation of the man to whom it is imparted, or from whom it is withheld ? No ; it is a thing of intrinsic worth : it is not a mere theme for declamation amidst fools and knaves ; but an inexhaustible source of noble thoughts and manly actions which cannot other-

wise be supplied. Security from "foreign levy
 "and domestic broil" is a small part of the office
 of good government; the formation of the human
 character, the developement of the great qualities
 of which nature has only given us the germs,
 are among its ends, not less than tranquillity
 at home and security from abroad. It is
 on their adaptation to this end that free govern-
 ments found their claim to superiority: by mak-
 ing the high functions of the state the reward
 of estimation among the men with whom we
 live, they inspire us with great motives for atchiev-
 ing the good and the great things by which esti-
 mation must be won. They add force to public
 opinion, both as a stimulant and a check: they
 increase the value of private character, and thus
 foster all the virtues of which it is composed:
 they spread the sovereignty through the body of
 the nation, and thus diffuse into the public mind
 not a little of the sustaining dignity and pride
 which appertain to sovereignty. They impart fear-
 lessness to the weak, and moderation to the strong,
 and to all they communicate that self respect, that
 perpetual observance of decorum and decent gra-
 vity of demeanour to which the Roman charac-
 ter of old was indebted for its port and stature,
 and which at this day distinguish the "proud
 Englishman" from all the obsequious and cringing
 vassals of the rest of Europe. It may happen ~~that~~
 from the nature of man, and the necessities of his
 condition, that a few individuals only of a nation
 shall be directly susceptible of the higher influence

of freedom ; but the example and exhortation of these few pervade and leaven the entire mass of the community. Is it then no evil to shut out from this elevating influence four millions of a kingdom whose population is not six ? Will the morals of the upper classes of the people, so excluded, suffer nothing ? Will they impart nothing of their character to the corresponding ranks of their more favoured countrymen, and will nothing gravitate from the higher to the lower orders ? To what pursuit will you direct the energies of the affluent, against whom, by the supposition, the range of public life is to be closed ? To what can they betake themselves but to pleasure, to vanity, to the gratification of sensual appetite ? Will the inheritors of wealth submit to solitude, to study, to self-denial, to days of abstinence and nights of vigil, without a motive to impel, a hope to sustain or cheer them ? Among a people where genius has no honour, where eloquence has no field, where public spirit would be a crime, what could you expect from the nobles and the wealthy ? Would the English universities be thronged with the high-born and affluent but for the functions to which they are called by the constitution of the country, and the general value which it has stamped upon intellectual acquirements ? Withdraw these rewards from the exertions of the English and they will subside into the state of apathy, sensuality, and ignorance, in which so large a portion of the rest of Europe is now sunk. The least noxious consequence that it is possible to expect from the Catho-

lic penal code, is, that the spirit of the Catholic nobility and gentry should quietly subside into this state,—that they should surrender themselves without reserve to the vilifying effects of wealth uncorrected by the ambition which it inspires, and by the high labours for which it encourages and enables us to prepare. Nature has made perpetual occupation, of one kind or another, requisite to the moral worth of man. When the restraint which the necessity of earning bread imposes on the passions is removed, we must provide another. The participation in the cares and duties of a free government furnishes this restraint ; it is effectual ; no other is. Therefore we find that England has not degenerated in morals,* though she has so much advanced in wealth ; and that the subjects of a despotic government are always immoral unless they are poor.

I should now conclude, but I cannot refrain from making an observation upon a most extraordinary argument with which Mr. Peel winds up his reasoning on the other side of the question. He conjures the House of Commons, if they entertain a doubt upon this subject, to give the benefit of that doubt to the existing order of things, and to weigh “the substantial blessings” which it has conferred upon the country, against the precarious advantages that are promised from a change. On

* The contrary has sometimes been said, but my position is, I think, true.

the contrary, I should have thought, that if a doubt existed it should operate on the side of mercy. If a jury were impanelled to enquire whether the principles which were held by any single individual were such as rendered him unworthy of the privileges of other citizens, the learned judge would tell them, it was the benignant spirit of our laws, that the accused should have the advantages of every doubt which existed of his guilt.

I do not see why the same wise and benevolent maxim should not prevail when the destinies of great multitudes are at issue, as well as when we are deciding upon the fate of a single man. Nor do I understand why the legislature^{we} should depart in the enactment of a law from the rule which it prescribes to him who is to execute it. Neither do I perceive why, in investigating the wisdom or justice of an old law, they are to be swayed by any other principles than those by which they should be guided if they were establishing a new one. It seems to me that there is something peculiarly to be lamented in the moral condition of the man to whom every thing, however ancient, that deals in punishment, every thing which afflicts great bodies of his species, which represses human genius, and dissociates mankind, does not present itself as an evil which is only to be endured upon the most manifest proof of its necessity ; it may be permitted to old age, so often disappointed in search of amelioration, constitutionally timorous, and al-

most confounding with the works of nature the institutions which it has been familiar with from childhood, to lean towards every thing that can plead time for its continuance, and to presume that whatever is, (however harsh) is for the best ; but the bent of well-constituted youth is quite the other way ; for confidence in human virtue and pity and benevolence are its attributes, its ornaments and flower, and seem to have been given to it by superior wisdom, that the errors of inexperience might always be in favor of humanity. But what could Mr. Peel mean by talking of the substantial blessings of the country ? Does he mean “ the substantial blessings ” of England or of Ireland ? Does he mean that the miseries of *this country* are to be held of no account in the decision of this question, *because* of the “ substantial blessings ” which *England* has enjoyed ? Does he mean that the prosperity of England is the only end of imperial ^{legisla-} ~~legislature~~, and that being once attained, that it would be rash and presumptuous to expose it to a possibility of hazard by aiming at the prosperity of Ireland ? Does he mean that the happiness of England should console the Irish for their misery ? I should have thought that such a mode of reasoning was incompatible with the spirit of the contract that binds together the two nations. I should have thought that when they were united, they were united “ for better and for worse, for prosperity and adversity,” for a participation of the good and evil in their present and future fortunes. I should have con-

sidered it a gross violation of their contract that one should be made to suffer the most intolerable evils to protect the over-abundant happiness of the other from the least and remotest hazard. If uninstructed by Mr. Peel, I never should have thought that it would be honest or manly in the English parliament, to which, as to the stronger vessel, the happiness of Ireland has been entrusted, to say to her when she complains of her condition, "the evils that you endure do not affect me; *I* am happy, and *I* do not wish for change; however, what you propose is necessary for *your* well being, it will be of no benefit to *me*. As it can do *me* no good, and may, by possibility, do me hurt, I oppose it, be the consequences as they may to *you*. I value too much the "substantial blessings" which I enjoy, to expose them to any risk by endeavouring to communicate them to you. I am determined to abide by "the government which is, for the government that you propose would not add to my prosperity." If the most unprincipled selfishness be wisdom, this argument is profoundly wise; but sure I am, it shocks every vulgar notion of generosity, of decency, of honesty.

But perhaps I have misunderstood Mr. Peel; perhaps he did not mean that the "substantial blessings" enjoyed by England should prevent any change for the benefit of Ireland. Perhaps when he spoke of the "substantial blessings" which should induce us to leave Ireland in her present state, he really

meant to say that her condition was very good—
 ‘good’ is relative, and the treatment which is indifferent for a human being, may be excellent for a beast. In this sense the condition of Ireland may be very good: considered as mere dogs, as creatures to be turned to sport or profit, the treatment of the Irish may be esteemed a “substantial blessing;” but if they be regarded as human beings endowed with rational souls, with the same origin and destination as other men; with the same “feelings, passions and appetites” as the rest of the human race, with virtues to develope, and intellect to cultivate, no nation of the world has been or is in a more miserable condition. There is not at this moment on the face of Europe, not excepting Spain, Italy, or the wildest tracts of Russia, a race of people worse clothed, worse housed, worse fed than the Irish peasantry; not a race of people who are subject to more contumely from the upper orders of society, or thrown into a relation to the government which is more destructive to the human character. This is so notorious in point of fact, however we may differ about the cause, that a foreign writer speaking of our history has said, that “neither the wars of the Barbarians, the descent of the Normans, or the persecutions of the Deoclesian, present any thing similar or second.” But Mr. Peel says it is a “substantial blessing,” and makes it an argument for not adventuring upon a change.

I am your very sincere friend, &c.

Dublin, Feb. 23, 1819.

FINIS.

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similar or second." Still, the fact is a "good
thing" and makes it an argument for
not averting upon a change.